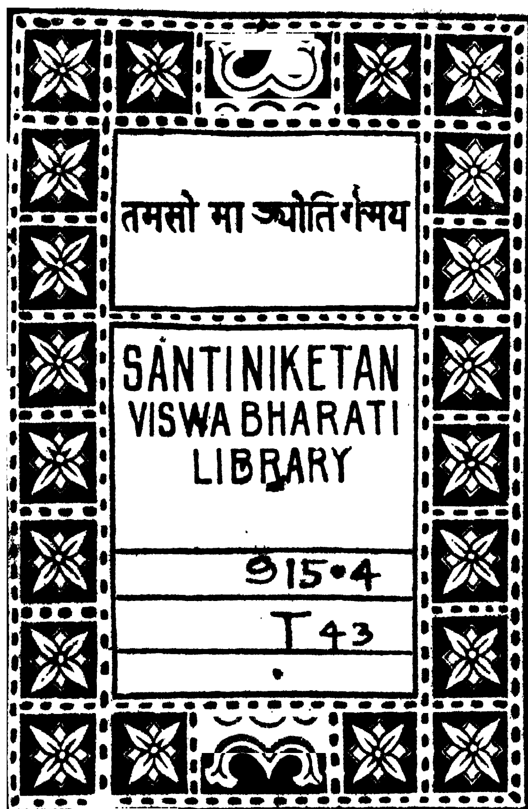

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THE VOICE OF THE ORIENT

THE VOICE OF THE ORIENT

BY MRS. WALTER TIBBITS

Qu'on m'aime mais avec de l'esprit!
LOUIS XIV.

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TO

MY GURU

WITH SILENCE

TO MAJI

WITH LOVE

FORENOTE

THANKS are due to the editors of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, *Morning Post* of Delhi, and *Mussoorie Times* for permission to reprint these articles which, except three, in their original form appeared in one of these papers.

For the photograph of Simla and the moonlight view of Bombay I am indebted to my friend Mr. P. D. Kirkham. That of the Gol Gombaz was bought from an unremembered artist in the deserted city. The Kashmiri scenes are mine.

The set of articles, "Stones of Delhi," are mainly a historical series written by request for the *Morning Post*, so that those not interested can skip them.

The other accounts are of history I have myself taken part in the making of. Whatever its merits or demerits it is taken STRAIGHT

FROM

FORENOTE

FROM LIFE as I have seen it. Whether it was worth recording is for the reader to judge, and of his charity with a first essay.

The most interesting portions of all history remain unwritten.

K. E. T.

GULMERG,
July 1908

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THE CITY OF FATE

Between the palms and the sea
Where the world-end steamers wait.

* To Bombay.



THE CITY OF FATE BY NIGHT

THE CITY OF FATE

THREE hundred years ago a member of my family left England, and crossed the Irish Channel, to a then unknown country, to found there a new house. As a reward for his enterprise two things were bestowed upon him, a lordly inheritance by the Virgin Queen, and the sobriquet of The Adventurer by the world. Into what varying atmospheres, what strange surroundings, have I found myself drawn by the attraction of those men and women, scattered over the world, who for different reasons have engaged my attention and invited my investigation.

Once I met a twentieth-century youth of London, who told me that the passion for probing unknown lives and investigating strange scenes had led him and a friend to pay nightly visits to Soho, and to enter unbidden any house whose door they found open. They reaped the recesses of Soho with a harvest of experience before which the thousand and one nights of Alf Laylah wa Laylah would pale, until

until one night an enormous negro rushed out of one of the open doors upon these self-invited guests and half-killed these new Haroun al Raschids.

The Spirit of George, The Adventurer, has led his latter-day descendant into motley surroundings, a brilliant kaleidoscope of scenes has followed the grey opening of childhood's gloom, when even classical fiction was forbidden, no letters allowed to be written, nor walks taken on Sunday, nor even the piano opened unless accompanied by a hymn, when an untimely discovery of a secret purchase of Scott's "Kenilworth" nearly led to a severe chastisement, when one was sternly commanded to remove a flower from a dress, and to be absent from the music of a secular band. Ah well! Life has been highly coloured since and has brought many changes.

To know the social worlds of three continents. To be in throne rooms, and in green rooms. To curtsey to European sovereigns, and to dance in halls where the Great Mogul dreamed. To pitch one's tent in the phantom city of the Durbar Camp, with princes for neighbours, who had emeralds for breastplates and giants in chain armour for followers. To

see

see the cameo profiles of India's lords against the golden howdahs of their elephants entering Delhi, to wonder if the fairy procession could be mortal, or if Indra himself had descended from Heaven to lead a train of elephants upon earth again.

To be bidden to solemn pageants at the Court of St. James to meet impassive princes of the far celestial Empire, and the Moorish envoys who had left "civilisation" to wonder at western life. To imagine oneself Undine as the Jhelum's ripples flapped beneath the houseboat moored to a chenar-tree, and the kingfishers and golden orioles flashed across the water lanes leading to the lake where we disturbed the blushing lotus of the Dahl. To watch from a safe corner epicurean bears slip down to munch the mulberries left from afternoon tea, an hour later to see the setting sun gild the flapping wings of the giant pelicans on that other lake of the Woolar, Kashmir's inland sea. To sleep beneath the shadow of the world's greatest dome in the heart of an Indian desert, and to forsake the presence of Viceroyalties to spend the afternoon instead in a solitude *à deux* with the porcelain dome of Delhi. To explore, attended only by a native guide,

guide, the labyrinthine streets of Benares City, and to penetrate into Hindu palaces where after the rare visits of mlenchas ("barbarians") the floors have been carefully purged and purified. Parisian actresses of European fame have welcomed me to their boudoirs, black-robed religieuses have invited me to their convents, and each has given me her confidence, knowing that a kindly interest, not an impertinent curiosity, has led me amongst them. Russian nihilists and Hindu sages have alike honoured me with their friendship, because we have all in our differing ways sought to gather feathers dropped by the white, soaring wings of the divine bird of Truth.

Port Said! Gate of the East! You are indeed the door between an old and a new existence, and ugly and brazen-looking as you are, you have the sincere affection of us who are orientals by nature, for whenever we pass up your sandy, garish main street, we feel that we have done with western unrest and turmoil and are already taken to the bosom of the silent, mystic East. And the hoarse chorus of the coolies who come to coal the vessel is as welcome to our ears as the sweetest

music,

music, and their approaching barge, full of figures which the first time reminded us of a Brocken, of an Inferno, becomes as welcome as the sight of Cleopatra's galley to Anthony, for we know that they are speeding us back to all that we have loved in life.

None of us with any imagination can ever pass down the Red Sea without thinking less of the children of Israel than of those sons and daughters of to-day whose lives have been changed while voyaging there. All sensitive natures feel to a greater or lesser degree the working within themselves of the ferment of the East. I have known more than one woman who has looked back all her life after to a P. and O. voyage as to its crisis.

For some have resulted pitiful histories. The Red Sea seems more charged with the electricity of human passion than any other of the world's waters. I can never pass the Bitter Lake without hearing re-echo from the rugged, cynical coasts beyond, the still bitterer cries of those men and women who, meeting fate there, have never been able to forget them again.

Bombay! How shall we speak of you?

 City

City so full of fate for us. Well may the old Portuguese dons have named you "the beautiful," would that my pen could describe you as eloquently as you always speak to me whenever I set foot upon your palm-girt shore. Queen of all Eastern cities, standing at the portal of that wonderful country of Hindustan which has been as a fairy godmother to so many of the Anglo-Saxon race, often beneficent, sometimes malign, always fateful, with what mixed emotions have we, the children of the West, greeted and paid adieux to your matchless bay!

If Marseilles is a city which thrills us with a kind of mental electricity, which gives the effect of the passage of currents generated by the boat-loads of human beings daily discharging and embarking at her side, where one seems to place one's finger on the beating pulse of life and find it strangely moving, so Bombay speaks to us of destiny, of joys hidden in the womb of the future, of sorrows buried in the past. How many English have I known who have found in India the desire of their hearts, who have left buried in her bosom their dearest and best. Never can one enter or leave Bombay Harbour without a

 thought

thought for all those men and women whose lives have been changed in its beyond. At this moment most clearly rises before me the image of that friend of auld lang syne, as we stood together on a P. and O. deck watching Bombay grow dim, he a member of an English millionaire family I had known from childhood, who had just left an idolised wife, after five years of happiness, in a little grave beneath the pines on the heights of Khandalla above. Heart-crushed by his sorrow, he was then rushing headlong down the road to ruin, but has since made a fresh start in the younger life of Johannesburg. If this memory ever reaches his hand across the seas, he will know to whom I send a cordial greeting of good will.

Under what varied aspects have I known Bombay!

On my first fair November morning in India, when the chattering of the exquisite little green parrots, in their home in the giant banyan-tree opposite Watson's Hotel, awoke and drew me on to the balcony to see on the horizon what looked like white wings piercing a silver mist suspended between earth and sky, how cheering and hopeful was

 the

the cloudless tropic dawn which brightens later into the busy morning life of the city, its gay crowds in the streets, its shops full of beautiful things from every part of the East.

And then the calm serenity of the bay in the afternoon rest, when the mystery of Elephanta has summoned us across to that flowery isle, to tread the winding passage leading to the caverns Shiva * blest. Even now no devotee of Shiva can visit that place and stand by the Shrine, formerly only open once a year, without instantly sensing some of that influence which worshippers of the Mightiest know, so that it does not need the giant figures on the wall and the other indications that it was once a Holy of Holies to the Shivite to tell us that Mahadeva himself had made it a place of power. And again at night, when the September damp heat and a troubled mind had made rest impossible, then how the cool, calming influence of the heights of Malabar Hill, the soft lawns and shadowy palms near the reservoir, soothed

* Shiva, or Mahadeva ("the Great God") is the Third Person of the Hindu Trinity, corresponding to the Holy Ghost of the Christian religion.

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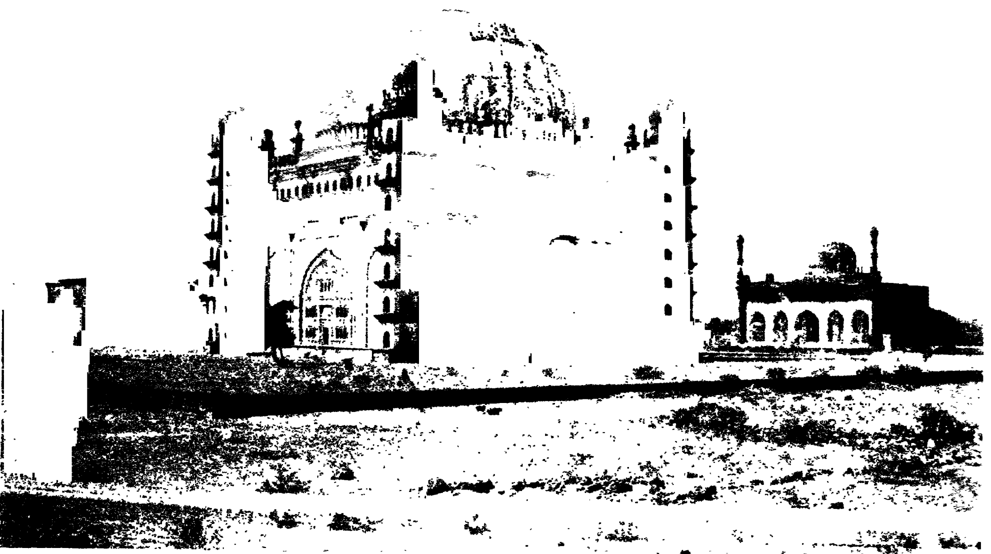
and refreshed as we watched the sleeping city below.

Always has Bombay fulfilled the promise she seemed to make that first dawn, written on the white pinions of the yachts pointing to the blue vault above.

DREAMS OF THE DECCAN

Women represent the triumph of matter over mind just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals.

The Picture of Dorian Gray.



THE GOL GOMBAZ, BIJAPUR

DREAMS OF THE DECCAN

ALL sensitive natures know the sharply marked impression one receives from various types of scenery. The soft-hued atmosphere of an Irish landscape, whose floating clouds with their changing shadows are said to have produced the uncertain, variable character of the people. The matchless splendour of a Mediterranean sunset seen from the terraces of the frescoed palaces of the knights, where the cactus hedges spread like giant hands towards the flaming sky, and the silhouettes of the monks stand out black and sharp against the glow in the monastery grounds as the bells of the angelus peal over the rocky island from a hundred churches. The dazzling beauty of the Indian hills, the mauve and white of the sparkling peaks of the Himalayas, where the snow lies thick and white as a soft bed promising rest, and the shadows of the awful crevasses appear as giant violets to the distant eye, speaking of all that is sweet and soothing. Or the gold of an evening in the Ghauts, when

the

the Deccan and the Concan are veiled in a shimmering garment, and Bombay harbour lies like a silver streak below, and the square-cut mountains form natural forts and battlements, and hide the silent aisles of dim, mysterious cathedrals belonging to a bygone faith in their womb. All these speak to the spirit who can hear of the world's stories and romances, of the magic and sorceries of different civilisations who have successively dyed it with their blood as Pyramus stained the mulberry tree with his life's current.

Then, if one travels southward across the rolling, sandy plains of the Deccan, one comes upon a phantom city rising suddenly from the desert, as in a mirage, its domes and columns, its green trees shading buildings some of the most magnificent ever made by mortal hands. Few people know that the largest dome in the whole world, larger than St. Paul's dome, larger than the Pantheon, is in a deserted city of the Deccan.

Still fewer know that Elizabeth of England had a contemporary queen of parallel greatness—a dusky sister of the Deccan—no whit behind her in intellect and strength. It is as though Asia, jealous for the pre-eminence of

 her

her women, flowered her choicest bloom, Chand Bibi, in every part a counterpart of Europe's greatest queen.

First in birth and education, the daughter of a royal house, of the King of Ahmednagar, she spoke many languages—Persian, Arabic, and Turkish. She painted flowers well, and played on the vina, and sang. Then, in strength of character, Chand Bibi was more human than Elizabeth, for she married a man, as well as her people, and swayed him as cleverly. He took no other wife or paramour—a most rare condition in an Islamite and a king, especially as Chand Bibi had no children. The jealous gods had struck her this cruellest blow to an eastern woman. So great is the horror thereof that, in this most altruistic of communities, no wife will lend her sari * to a childless woman. Yet the women of Bijapur rose up *en masse* to hoot Kamil Khan, the traitor to their queen. They rained dust and ashes as he rode through the streets. Chand Bibi needed her strength. The gods never rested. They tore her husband, Adil Shah, from her arms. He died (1580) after she had helped him build a kingdom, as well as its

* An Indian woman's dress.

fairest monuments. The second largest mosque in India is their work, only lesser than the Jama Musjid, of Delhi, as Bijapur itself was of Mahommedan kingdoms only second to that of Delhi, which eventually absorbed it.

How lovely was the Jama in the mellow sunlight that July afternoon, as I passed in stockinged feet over the polished floor, through the five long arcades bisected by nine, to the Mehrab, gorgeous in colours and gold.

To some minds no country in the world presents scenes which attract as India does. Under no other skies are our imaginations and emotions so stirred. The men and women who have acted on its stage and passed away, leaving "properties" behind them, appeal to us more powerfully, and seem to claim closer kin than any others. But of all comparatively modern Indian historical scenes—for in a country with a past in millions of years, three centuries ago is but yesterday—I think Bijapur is the most vivid. It is extraordinary that, notwithstanding the great beauty of Bijapur architecture, the unique situation of this city of the desert, very few people know anything about its history, thrilling enough even to befit the scenes presented to the eye.

For

For it is not only that Bijapur contains a few colossal masterpieces, but the whole area within its walls, the size of Paris, is covered with the remains of palaces, mosques, tombs, tanks, and gateways, many in a perfect state of preservation. Yet all are empty and mournfully deserted. Once eager crowds filled the great Jama Musjid, and passing citizens gazed up awestruck at Mahommed Shah's erection, and each little gem mosque had its own *clientèle* of worshippers. Now we pass along empty streets, whose walls are tumbling into ruins. We penetrate into lonely halls, where we can but lament that their exquisite decorations should be left to feast the eye of the stray enthusiast who, forsaking the haunts of men, puts up with the discomforts of the dak bungalow in pity for their desolation.

Adil Shah and Chand Bibi also built the great tank of the city. The cool green water fills the huge square basin to which the broad steps lead us. Of all the world's cities, Bijapur has the most elaborate water-tanks. The sybarites of the desert city knew the enjoyments of water to the full. There the fluid rivals the falls of Lodore in intricacies. It doubles on itself in the rills, and winds up and down

towers,

towers, and out of peacocks' mouths, in bewildering wiles. For most of these subtleties a woman's brain is responsible, as well as for the citadel. But it is to her greatest gift, she who was the King's almoner to the poor, to the huge water-tank that she has left her name. It is called to-day the Chand Bauri. Near there is the half-finished tomb of Adil Shah. Its double colonnades, with their perfect Gothic arches, point to what love's memory meant to do. But the gods would not allow Chand Bibi even her sorrow in peace. Not for her the luxury of grief. The traitor within overthrown, the invader appears at the gates. We see her in person going from post to post on the walls, this girl of twenty-five, cheering her soldiers all through one rainy season. This siege lasted one year, after which the internal discords ceased, and the invaders withdrew.

Once more the relentless gods struck. The Queen went to her childhood's home, to the Kingdom of Ahmednagar, for a wedding. There a family tragedy took place, and her royal father and brother were at war. This led to revolution, and Queen Chand put her forces of Bijapur in the field. It is pleasant to know that her latter days were peaceful. Her

 regency

regency for her nephew, Ibrahim II., ended, and she only ruled when the King was away. For years she had sat veiled behind her Minister twice a week, when he transacted business in the Hall of Audience. Its windows are carved to represent the setting sun. From the gilded hall a door, carved in ivory octagonals and blue enamels, gives on to a beautiful little room. The painted walls have a green creeper with blue flowers. In the niches are large vases of flowers. Here Chand Bibi sighed with relief after those audiences. For, unlike Elizabeth, power to her was duty, not pleasure. She had the tact of the Tudors. She ruled a realm as large, a population as great and as intelligent and as rich as Elizabeth. She conciliated the Hindu princesses, her tributaries. She met her Armadas many times by her own personal valour. But she never wished for absolute power. No shade of Mary of Scots darkens her door. No Leicester hung about her skirts. Simple and generous, frank and merciful, as she was chaste and God-fearing, she, her chronicler tells us, among all the women of India, stands out as a jewel without flaw and beyond price.

When one thinks of the many ponderous

 volumes

volumes that have been written on, for instance, the Second Empire of France, the wish arises that even one author would write fully of the Empire of Bijapur. It witnessed a series of reigns, each scintillating with marvels.

It is said that no scene of its kind—except, perhaps, the approach to Palmyra—is so impressive to the traveller as when he nears this queen of the Indian desert now left of her lovers. The engine of the Southern Maratta Railway, like a toy train, winds its way across the Deccan. He eagerly watches to catch the first sight of the Great Dome of Bijapur. It is visible eighteen miles away, and for at least an hour before the train reaches the deserted city. He has to make his way over one of the most barren and desolate tracks, the vast dried-up plateau of Southern India. For hours nothing but brown hillocks and occasional little mud villages have met his eye.

Suddenly, on either side of the railway carriage, he sees the plain, scattered with the egg-shaped monuments of departed Mahommedan heroes. Before he has time to take in the magical picture, he finds himself deposited right under the shadow of the famous colossal tomb of the Emperor Mahommed Shah.

We

We arrived in the afternoon, and having lunched at the little wayside station we found that the dak bungalow where we would sleep was actually the beautiful mosque belonging to the great mausoleum. So we slept beneath the shadow of the great dome, between it and us only the water tank of the mosque, alas now empty, and its central fountain silent, as the rest of this city of desolation.

Shall I ever forget it? Going out into the darkness after dinner in the mosque, where our voices echoed round its walls to the vaulted roof, where the lamps were placed in the niches of the mehrab, and the old Mahommedan khansamah spoke in weird sepulchral tones, and feeling more than seeing, that gigantic memorial of human frailty towering over us. It told of a man who realised how short his day must be, who desired above all things an immortal name on earth. Had he pondered unsatisfied on the problems of the after life?

Late in the evening we had climbed into the whispering gallery of the dome, and looking over the low parapet, as one might look down from the topmost gallery of the Albert Hall, had seen the last rays of sunlight fall on

 the

the tomb of Mahommed Shah, the only spot of light amid the shades of that vast death chamber. Beside him rest his grandson, his young wife, and his elder one, but next to him, and nestling closest to his side, is the small tomb of Rhumba, the courtesan, who held the first place in his life.

Rhumba, the best beloved of Mahommed Shah, the Merry Monarch, the Charles II. of India, whose sceptre swayed Southern India, whose capital was the size of Paris, whose tomb is the grandest on earth !

When the shades of night fill that vast mausoleum, and throw a pall of purple velvet over the tombs of the queens and the prince, then the last flickering light from the dying day rests on the tiny tomb of Rhumba. There are many of the fair and frail of whom men have known more. The scarlet life of Rhumba has not to my knowledge dyed the pages of even one western book. Yet no other courtesan in the world's history has been so honoured in death as this woman of the Deccan, whose dust lies in Asia's greatest mausoleum, in the company and in precedence of two empresses, beside the mighty monarch who loved her in life. Strange that the

 world's

world's greatest dome should shelter one who took between her tiny, fragile fingers the world's greatest law, and broke it! Even in life the surroundings of Rhumba were unique, for Mahommed housed his treasure in such wise as no other woman has been domiciled fore or since. For her he built the seven storeyed doll's house of the Sat Manjli, the seven tiny sets of apartments piled high above each other. In each storey the water works, so characteristic of the city of the desert, are carried to the topmost floor, providing in each set a bijou bath room, where once the water sparkled on the amber limbs of Rhumba, and cooled the perfumed air of the little gilded rooms. On a wall of the ground set the sweet mistress of the seven tiers was painted opposite her imperial lover, till, jealous of so great a happiness, the rude dagger of the Satara Rajah scraped them off.

In how great a contrast to the insouciant life of Rhumba, lived only for the flesh, is that of another woman, seeking only for the spirit, one whose family were princes when Poona was the city of the Peiswas, a great lady to-day, in whose veins flows the bluest blood of the Deccan. Living outwardly in semi-

royal

royal state, her carriage preceded by an outrider in scarlet, inside the big barred gates of her mansion in the heart of Poona, with its rows of red-coated retainers in the courtyards, its halls with curiously carved pillars, thousands of years and miles away from the Cantonment and the Gymkhana Club, in the dim stained light of the family temple, she a brahman of the strictest orthodox type, lives the life which a Hindu widow should, bared of all ornaments, fasting entirely alternate days, all her thoughts absorbed in preparation for joining her lord on the other side of death. There in that old world mansion, with its mogra flowers, its frankincense, its fountains, splashing on the plantains, she taught me the first lessons of the Hindu religion learned in this life. Umabai Raste, you were the first Hindu to welcome back to the Motherland, to what warmer welcomes was yours but the prelude !

From Poona we visited the Karli Caves, which Mme. Blavatsky told Colonel Olcott, on the occasion of their visit there, was a centre of occultism to this day, there being still ascetics concealed in the heart of the mountain, and reached by hidden passages from

from the outer caves. It will be remembered she herself penetrated into them leaving the Colonel outside. All guide books fully describe the outer caves, but do not give the wonderful inscriptions which I copy here to show how the Buddhist revival stirred the whole Maratta nation from its kings to its carpenters.

On the lion pillar outside :

> "From Aginitranaka, son of Goti, a great warrior, a Maratta, the gift of a lion pillar."

Below the giant elephants on the front :

> "The gift of first, two elephants, and above and below the elephants a moulding by the venerable reverend Ludadeva."

Over the right-hand side door :

> "The gift of a door by Sihadata, a perfumer."

On a pillar in front of the verandah :

> "The gift of Bhagila, the mother of Mahadevanaka, a householder."

A lower inscription :

> "Samika, son of a carpenter, made the doorway and the door."

On a pillar in the nave :

> "The gift of the cost of a pillar by Satimita out of respect for his maternal uncle the Bhadanta, by his disciple and sister's son, Satimita, with his father and mother."

Below

Below this :

"The gift of a pillar containing relics by Satimita."

In the gallery :

"The gift of Asadhamita, a nun."

Outside to the right of the central door :

"To the Perfect. Usabhadata, son-in-law of the King, the giver of 300,000 cows, having given gold, and being a visitor to the tirth at the Benasa river, the gift of sixteen villages to gods and Brahmans."

To the left of the central door :

"King Vasithiputa, the illustrious lord, in the year seventh, of summer the first fortnight, and first day, on that day Somadeva, a great warrior, son of V—— (name indistinct) gave a village to the Sangha of Valuraka."

To the right of the central door on a rail :

"The gift of a rail ornament by the Nun Kodi, mother of Ghanika. Made by Nadika."

In the Vihara :

"To the Perfect. The King V—— (indistinct) this meritorious gift of a nine-celled Mandapa for the continuance in happiness of father and mother and all people and living things."

Over a water cistern :

"The female disciple of a Bhadanta gave a lena."

In a cell :

"To the Perfect. The meritorious gift of the ascetic Buddharakita."

Seven miles from Karli, still further away into the heart of the glorious Ghauts, are the Bhaja Caves, eighteen of them, dating from the first or second century B.C. and reached by a rough tonga road leading to a Maratta fort. Dismounting at the village of Maval we climbed four hundred feet over a very rough and precipitous hill.

Here the inscriptions ran :

Over a cell door :

"The gift of Badha, a ploughman's wife."

Over two wells :

"The religious gift of a cistern by Vinhudata, son of Kosiki, a great warrior."

On the third daghoba : *

"The thupa of the Venerable reverend Ainpi Kinaka."

* Relic shrine.

THE HILL OF DOOMED HOPES

They eat, they sleep, they work, they plod,
They go to Church on Sunday,
And many are afraid of God
And more of Mrs. Grundy.



THE HILL OF DOOMED HOPES

THE HILL OF DOOMED HOPES

IF Ouida's shade won't think me ungrateful for many hours of happiness second only to opium's rare ecstasy, I should like to have accompanied Othmar when he tracked tigers in the forest recesses of Lahore, taken tea with Princess Napraxine from the tea set engraved by goldsmiths of the Deccan who sat beneath banana trees, and still more to have flashed with the meteoric Strathmore through the *fuchsia* gardens of Simla before he flitted back *viâ* the slave markets of Stamboul to his divan and his rose water in Park Lane.

Still even minus the fuschia gardens what a crowd of turgid ideas and memories of human histories the name of Simla calls up. Surely never elsewhere was any circle of hills the amphitheatre of so many dramas from real life, never was a more effective setting for the spectacle which men and women play. More beautiful than any drop scene by the greatest stage artist is Simla in the spring, and like a

drop scene almost unreal in its exquisite daintiness.

The snows are the background of course, but distant and sugary in their sweetness as in the setting of a toy scene or in the pretty landscape on a French bon-bon box, not near and grand and majestic as at Darjiling, where one becomes part of their life, rejoicing in their sparkling gladness under the bright sunbeams, shivering with them when the gloomy grey mist enshrouds them.

Then in the foreground the lovely colour scheme of the delicate cloud of pink peach blossom, palpitating on its brown leafless branches against the cobalt sky, making a fit frame for a fair woman's face and exquisite as a scene on a Watteau fan in its dainty painting, or again gladdening the sombre depths of a background of dark deodars standing sentinel-like on the khud. Never were rich green and pale pink in so daring and successful a contrast as in Nature's masterpiece, nowhere else for the eye which can see them are such banquets of delight. Even the bazaar, scrambling up the hill side, has prettiness if one looks for it in the rich browns and

 yellows

yellows of the houses, the gay dyeing of the saris.*

Near the coign of vantage from where one views the toy snow scene is the fashionable photographer's shop where society ladies make pictures even more unreal in carefully posed attitudes.

How photography reveals traits which the living face masks ! How in looking at the portraits of the women at Jeakin's the inner life of each is revealed, their restless ambitions contrasting with the marble calm of the Viceroy's wife who has nothing further to gain or lose.

The eye of the camera appears to penetrate where the eye of man fails to pierce the disguise, just as it registers rays in astronomical science which are imperceptible to any other sight. The photographer flings open the door to the modern palace of Truth.

There are many worlds in Simla. The noisest is that circle of men and women who have no higher ideal in life than to win a prize in a "bumble puppy," to be seen speaking to a Vicereine, or to have an A.D.C. as an attaché. When they die these people go to

* An Indian woman's dress.

a Valhalla not above the snows in Heaven but down the khud at Annandale.

The prominent Anglo-Indian officials and their wives travel in greater state than most European royalties. One Member of Council's wife travelling with her maid and seven servants had her reserved carriage detached from the front and placed in the centre of the train. When, in spite of these precautions, an accident occurred and we were all hung up for hours on the line, the traffic superintendent ran up and down the train in anguish when he read the august name printed on the luggage labels and carried her traps to the relieving train with his own hands.

It may be argued that State and consideration are due to those in whose hands the fate of a great empire rests, and no one grudged this particular *bara mem* * the privileges of her rank, for she always evinced the graciousness of royalty as well as its dignity.

Far otherwise was it with some others who wore the purple, and I cannot resist repeating this inimitable story, which only those who have lived in Anglo-India can appreciate as it deserves, and which was related to me by the

* Great lady.

brother

brother of a Lieutenant-Governor of one who, when I first lived in the Bombay Presidency, was its uncrowned king, though he now occupies an unknown position in the land of shades.

From his Excellency the Governor to the humblest sepoy all trembled in deadly awe of this terrible personage, who held himself above all law, an unmuzzled autocrat in fact, and for himself and his retinue set aside regulations which even royalties punctiliously observed, with the tremendous phrase "I am John Cogent!"

Only once was this honoured enormity taken at a disadvantage and that by a gallant Colonel who has since joined him in shadow land. "Ah," he said, "*when we get into the Bayswater bus* I shall still be Colonel Darly Dale!"

Dumbfounded, paralysed, the great man collapsed into a corner.

Yet greater kindness and camaraderie is shown among the English in India to each other when in trouble than in any other community. When a poor little woman went mad over the death of her baby and locked herself in with its corpse refusing to open the door, it was to Lady Curzon herself, who could not be denied, that the door eventually opened.

I cannot help thinking the most dangerous tendency of life in India is the crushing out of individuality, for Emerson's remark that "Nothing is more rare in any man than an act of his own" is truer there than anywhere else. The military type is a splendid one, but a bit narrow, and the English women in India who can converse upon *any* subject may be counted on the fingers of one hand.

It has been remarked that the life of Anglo-India has the opposite effect on its men to its women. The Anglo-Indian man has the reputation of presenting on the whole the finest type of the British Empire, *e.g.*, of the Anglo-Saxon race. Clean cut, decisive in body and mind, he is ready for every emergency of work or play, equally at home quelling a riot, tracking a tiger, and attending a lady. The Anglo-Indian woman, on the other hand, does not enjoy, *as a type*, the same pre-eminence either in literature or in real life.

Why should the same conditions of life react so differently on the sexes? Why should a man's life be broadened and raised by it, a woman's narrowed and contracted?

I think it is because, as a rule, men embrace some at least of the priceless opportunities.

 India

India offers them and women do not. As a rule the Government official deals out justice to the people, even if his manners to them might be more suave, and he studies the country's languages and peoples, and certainly avails himself of the world of jungle life to the uttermost.

India possesses a history scintillating with marvels, a literature of breathless interest, a profound philosophy satisfying every craving of the human heart, offering a salve for every sore. But the majority of English women who spend their lives in India never seek her acquaintance at all, shut their eyes to the richest treasure storehouse in the world and confine themselves to perhaps the poorest, most meagre life in the world, that of the Station Club and the Gymkhana Course, though showing a heroic courage when called upon to share physical danger and discomfort with their lords.

And yet the greatest orientalist * of our day has told us that over the whole earth no country is so richly endowed as India with all the wealth, power, and beauty of nature, in some parts a very paradise on earth. Also, he says, under

* Max Muller in "What Can India Teach Us?"

 her

her sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest of problems of life. And again, he says, that in Indian literature the European may draw what is most wanted to make his inner life more perfect, not for this life only, but an eternal life.

All honour to that scanty band of men and women who, like Hunter and Fanny Bullock Workman, will cycle seventy miles in the hot sun, tortured with an unimaginable thirst, armed with camera and enthusiasm, to retrieve for us from monsoon and morass and jungle some of the priceless treasures of India's glorious past.

Enthusiasm! How many women leave India with any left! With the capacity to be keen about anything? Madame Blavatsky taught that there are many persons moving in society who are derelicts, from whom the Ego, the immortal spark, has fled in despair, the living dead.

Yet there have been brilliant livers of both sexes in Anglo-India. For it has been computed that for its size the community does not compare badly with any other in its litterateurs, both of men and women, though perhaps they

have

have not produced in proportion to the extraordinary wealth of material for work. How many romances could be written from one street of the bazaar life, did one know it thoroughly !

One of the cleverest women in Anglo-Indian society has had an interesting career. Beginning life as the daughter of a retired Tommy Atkins, she was educated in a school where she easily outran the other girls in her quickness at lessons, her nimbleness in needlework.

On returning to her father's cottage bungalow she informed the local dhobi * that she would be very happy to repair any rents he had made in his washing for a "Heaven-born" † gentleman in his *clientèle*. The dhobi, nothing loth, foreseeing immunity from the fines and kicks his carelessness was wont to entail, delightedly obeyed her behest. The Heaven-born in his turn noting the exquisite care, the cobwebby stitches with which his linen was of late repaired, could do nothing less than call to thank the *deus ex machina*, the beneficent fairy, who plied her needle so

* Washerman.

† Members of the Indian Civil Service (covenanted) are called "the Heaven-born."

 mysteriously

mysteriously and modestly on his behalf. In a few weeks, he was a Benedict, and she a leader in a society which can only offer its heartiest congratulations on the happiness of his choice of the talented lady who fills so worthily the high position he has raised her to. I have related this little tale from real life to display the turns and twists of Fortune's wheel, and to prove that the poor maligned Indian dhobi is not so black as he is painted and can arrange marriages as propitiously as the barber of old.

A few words may here not be out of place on one of the burning questions of the hour, one which has shaken and may shake again the British Empire to her foundations. Even now the air is full of rumours of open disloyalty. Last week the second city of the Indian Empire was in a state of insurrection until the troops fired upon the insurgents, and only a few months since a whole native regiment threw down their arms and marched out of barracks *en masse*.

I have had more opportunity than most for the study of a subject which fills the air to-day, standing, as will appear from these pages, in a peculiar position between the Hindu

and

and English races, at the meeting of the waters.

I am convinced, and all my Indian friends agree with me, that the unrest among the educated classes is caused chiefly by the race prejudice, the personal rudeness and contempt shown by "white people" in railway trains and other places of contact, and not by any sense of Government injustice. "I wish the Deputy Commissioner would be as polite as the Viceroy," said an Indian nobleman well known in the western literary world. "His Excellency stands up to greet me and shows me to the door. The Deputy Commissioner sits still and holds out a hand over his shoulder." This gentleman, as well as Mrs. Besant, have both represented this view to his Excellency at the request of the leaders of the Hindu nation, but they alas! recognise that the Viceroy, with all the will in the world, is powerless to do much, so powerful a body confronts him.

A judge, who is noted for his merciless severity upon the bench, told me of his sense of injustice when some second-class passengers put into a "first" in a full train objected to "natives" who had paid the full fare!

The

The tongue is the most potent weapon known in Simla. It is indeed mightier than the sword and the fear of society gup the firmest foundation of morals. Men who would step unflinching up to the cannon's mouth walk warily before the eagle eyes of the Simla dowagers. Women, who brave the plague and cholera horrors cheerfully, squirm in terror of the tongues of society crones, of the foul slanders given birth to over the tea-tables and which have usually as much foundation as the vapour from the tea-kettle spout. Simla scandal is, indeed, no respector of persons, it stalks like a hideous hydra-headed monster, naked and unashamed, seeking whom it may devour, amongst the smiling ranks of society, and nobody knows who will be the next victim to its insatiable maw. On the other hand, persons who come to Simla obscure and unknown, sometime suddenly awake to enviable fame, such as the learned and gallant medical gentleman who, having braved all the guns of Dargai, with his hospital for the wounded near the hottest part of the battle, and received no reward, the morning after dancing a hornpipe in a burlesque at the Gaiety Theatre, was at once made Honorary Surgeon to the

 Viceroy,

Viceroy, and honours and distinctions heaped upon his bronzed and blushing head.

But to others the life of Simla is lived to less trivial ends. How many have lived here for good or evil undying memories ; to how many the red of the rhododendrons, that most vivid of all flowers, must ever recall days which will never fade away. How potent the language of flowers. It is a matter of history how the yellow snapdragon, appearing annually on the grey walls of his college, spoke to that gracious undergraduate of Oriel of an Eternal Hope, and how the bright gold of its hues seemed to permeate his nature so that none other of his generation gained his charm and ascendency over men even as far apart from himself as the poles, so that that man of blood and iron Sir Richard Burton writes in his memoirs, " I took a great fancy to Dr. Newman and used to listen to his sermons when I would never give half an hour to any other preacher." And when the pink begonias first appear beneath the snow on the Indian hills, and a little later the pale mauve violets powder the golden brown khud, do they not speak to all of us not too dulled by pain to hear of the awakening hopes of a new year?

And

And as one wanders in the royal pleasure-grounds of the old Kings of Oudh in the Kaisar Bagh Gardens of Lucknow, where the water runs in rills beneath the orange trees, how the bright colouring of the golden fruit against the dark glossy leaves and sweet scent of the bridal flowers blooming together, and the yet more powerful fragrance of the syringa, the sweetest flower on earth, surrounding the deserted palaces proclaim the beauty of a spring in Oudh. So the rhododendrons of Simla speak of all that is most glorious and most dominant in human passion, of the love which makes the world go round.

The flowers which in succession carpet the Simla khuds always remind me of the four stages of human destiny. The violets in the spring of the opening of life, sweet, fragrant, enthusiastic. The rhododendrons in the hot weather of its noontide passion, the white veil of the lilies of the valley later on of its bridal hours, the pale half-mourning tints of the iris in the autumn of its decline. The spring of which I write was one of an upheaval of nature of earthquake, and terror, and sudden death. In Simla we woke one morning to find the house rocking and quivering

 on

on its foundations as a leaf on the whirlwind, chimneys tottering and washing down the khud from the roof and brick walls crumpling up like paper. Though the town escaped more easily than most, even here people lying in their beds were carried bodily along, and the Vicereine herself had a narrow escape from a stack of chimneys which crashed through the room above her. At Bhagi, only three miles away, the hot springs of the Satlej shot jets sixty feet high, accompanied by a roar as of artillery, while in the Kangra Valley fire belched forth from the mountain side. At Dharamsala, a neighbouring military station, hundreds of gallant little Gurkhas were swept in a moment into the presence of that King who for them has no terrors, while almost the entire white official community perished. The rising tide of the gaieties of the opening Simla season was delayed in its mad rush for a few days by a force yet more determined, more compelling, and the poor moths fluttering round the lamp of pleasure were arrested, shivering with terror, home stricken, their gay wings cramped, paralysed, as they realised what worms they were in the presence of an imperious power. It was as if nature, like an

 outraged

outraged parent, tolerant, patient, long-suffering, had at last avenged herself on her rebellious offspring, on those men who, for the sake of sycophancy had lost their manliness, on these women who, to gain the withered laurels of fashion, had renounced for themselves the holy halo of maternity.

It was on a bright November morning that I last left Simla *en route* for Delhi. Never before had I remained at the summer capital so late in the year, always had I left before the gay plumaged birds of fashion had migrated south for their winter quarters and the Mall did indeed present a dismal appearance, peopled mainly by staggering coolies bearing on their backs cruelly heavy packs, but not heavier than the weights borne by many a human heart at the season's wane. No hill in the world sees the dawn and decay of so many human hopes as the Himalayan Hill of Simla. Oh the girls I have seen arrive bright-eyed and fresh and eager at the dawning of the season, their smiles and their dresses, fresh from home, to leave at the end, with faces dull and dead of hope, disappointed, disillusioned, to descend the hill too often into the inferno of enforced solitude. The men who have come

to Simla with bright hopes of a career above the ordinary who have seen their dreams slowly fade, as they sank to the level of the club gossip and the "peg" of forgetfulness. The women who have left Simla with lives never to run in their old untroubled courses again !

Simla in the autumn might indeed stand as the representation of the faded hopes of India ; and the jackals' weird cry at night as they howl round the khud is not more desolate than the cry of the men and women who sink down the hill disheartened to the arid plains beneath.

EASTERN AND WESTERN LOVE

And all men kill the thing they love,
By all let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword.

The Ballad of Reading Gaol.



PYRE (x) OF THE LAST KASHMIRI SATI

EASTERN AND WESTERN LOVE

We have just had the gayest, merriest season at the Kashmiri hill station of Gulmarg, albeit we have lived in a hotel built of boards knocked together so roughly that you are lucky if in your private bedchamber you are only overheard, not overseen, which is buried thirty feet deep in snow in winter, a playground for bears instead of subalterns. Pushing aside the chick,* which gives such a pretty tapestry effect to the scene outside, the dandy † carries me down the road past groups of fungus in every shade of fawn velvet, for it is the rainy season, past cascades stained with the blood-like torrents of crimson water weeds, past where Nunga Parbat, fourth highest mountain in the whole world, is hiding his head in disdain, to Baramula Dak Bungalow, the first resting place of my return journey from the loveliest country in the world.

Transparent screen.
† Wooden cradle borne by porters.

Nowhere is my passion for adventure so gratified as in a dak bungalow, obliged by law to shelter *any* traveller for twenty-hours, where we all sit down together at table dressed in any costume, and where I have met and conversed with every sort, from one who had declined to be Viceroy to two who were wanted by the police. It is pouring in torrents, so I postpone till to-morrow the first stage of the grandest drive I know, and these reflections suggest themselves while watching the Jhelum wind sluggishly past.

Higher up the river towards sunny Bijbehara the water has lapped the banks of a bungalow the scene of a prolonged Hindu honeymoon, the most successful affair of its kind I have ever seen, albeit the consent of either party to this marriage arranged in eastern fashion was according to custom never asked. The bride, a member of a princely house, a little purdah lady thirteen years of age, is the prettiest piece of living Tanagra work, and if all women were as happy as she with the handsome Bengali youth Fate has assigned her to, how many suffragettes would be left to clang bells in market places, bawl through

 megaphones,

megaphones, chain themselves to iron spikes, and slash at men with dog whips?

Oh what a difference in the eastern and western woman's lot! Who but a lunatic could fail to see where the balance of happiness lies? "We don't profess to worship our women," said a Hindu who knew something of the horrors of one English girlhood, "but I think we treat them better."

If it be objected to the business-like contract on the part of the parents in a Hindu marriage, is it not at least more above board and self-respecting than the manœuvring and stratagems often resorted to by an English mother to get her daughter "off"?

"I shall postpone my marriage for some months," said the most beautiful woman in Paris, "to give my *fiancé* plenty of time to change his mind." She was engaged to a member of the Marlborough Club, a man of wealth and position, whom almost every mother in London would have considered desirable, whose love for her was so great that he was willing to forego the company of all good women for her sake. With this remark of the most famous demi-mondaine of

of her day I could not help thinking of the many marriages in the other half of the world I have known hurried on also in case of "change." A demi-mondaine then is prouder than a society dame.

With the Hindu on both sides love is reticent. A girl would rather die than tell or show her preference, and on her marriage she takes the veil as a consecration, for in conservative families a bride never shows her face unless her mother-in-law raises her *sari* to look at it, never sees her husband in daylight, nor may meet him in darkness until the elder women are asleep. Perhaps that is the *raison d'être* of the prolonged Hindu honeymoon.

And it means responsibility. No adult Hindu may live a life for number one, a life of watertight compartments so to speak. Quite recently I read a letter written by one who in his day was one of the smartest officers of the Indian Army, who was wont to boast of having enjoyed life more fully than other men. Wrecked in health, crippled in finance, hiding from his oldest friends, he wrote to one from his dying bed this terrible warning: "Take the advice of one who has been a part failure, for what have I in life? Form ties when you

 are

are a captain, no matter what your Colonel tells you. When I go out no one in the world will care a snap of the finger."

The compulsory chastity of the Indian wife is the outer reflex of that law of the eastern occult schools which regards it as the *one* obligatory virtue in a woman. As "Virtus" was to the Roman man so is "Virtue" to the eastern woman. When a female candidate knocks at the Door of the Hidden Wisdom only one question is asken by its guardians before it flies open. The ideal of fidelity to one man is considered of such paramount importance in a woman that it satisfies all requirements in itself. No other qualifications are necessary, and girls of the three twice-born castes are only admitted into caste on their marriage.

Thus we see that the law of the Elder Brothers of humanity is at one, only much more strenuously enforced, with that which rules the whole human race.

And we are taught that it is based on a law of electrical science, that the two kinds of electricity are the bases for the differences of sex, that man has positive magnetism and woman negative. That therein lies the *raison*

 d'être

d'être for the world's omnipotent dictum that a woman defaulter to the greatest law of life is more guilty than a man, because a negative can have only one positive, but a positive may satisfy more than one negative. This is the foundation for that inexorable double social law all over the earth.

However hard it may sometimes seem in individual cases the twofold dictum of one law for the man and another for the woman has its being in the heart of nature herself.

And so, speaking broadly, the most masculine man, he who has lived his life to the uttermost, is usually attracted by the most feminine woman, she who has *par excellence* the attributes of a good woman, the white page of a blameless life. A woman of the mystic temperament falls prostrate before a reckless dare-devil. This law of nature operates to such an extent that men who are the most liberal to themselves are the most conservative, even prudish, in their ideas about women, having an abject fear of the tittle-tattle of worthless people about those they love.

Extremes meet when Bernard Shaw, the Socialist, is at one with the most conservative circle in the world, the Hindu aristocracy, in

saying

saying that to make a woman *pecuniarily independent is very often to make her immoral.* Yet perhaps we must not take this opinion too seriously from that master of inconsistency, for, though known all his life as a lover of paradox, it was not till late in life that he married a woman, sufficiently rich to continue after marriage her own separate establishment.

Indian women are jealously guarded, protected against themselves. So that almost never does a Hindu woman learn that saddest of all lessons that marriage is an institution to save a woman from that side of a man's nature which it is wisest to leave undisturbed. That when unrestrained by law, the greater a woman's love the more relentless will he be towards her when the day of disillusion dawns and that devotion becomes inconvenient to him.

Baber, one of the finest all-round men who ever lived, throws a lurid light on this point when he writes in his immortal memoirs, an old, rare edition I routed out of the dust in the Delhi City Library, "Sultan Ahmed Mirza married Kotak Begum for love. He was prodigiously attached to her, and she governed him with absolute sway. She drank wine.*

* Equivalent to a suffragette of to-day.

 During

During her life the Sultan durst not frequent any of his other ladies. At last, however, he put her to death and delivered himself from his reproach."

Yet Sultan Ahmed acted with less refined cruelty than some others of his kind. At least he put her out of pain at once. An Englishman once travelled all the way from India to Australia at the invitation of a woman, the wife of a drunkard and an opuim eater, who loved this other not wisely but too well. He enjoyed the hospitality of her beautiful home, lived in her society probably the best times of his life, but a year or two after he would scarcely spare an hour from his yachting and his dancing to write to her those precarious letters for which she used to "go down on her knees and thank God." Yet he was accounted the very best of sorts among men.

Under the *régime* of marriage a man often becomes a most abject slave even of a worthless woman. One who had made a love match and had a sweet child as the crystallisation of her dream, used to cry for hours because she could not have a coronet and the Carlton. Yet her husband's one regret in

 life

life was that he could not satisfy her every whim.

From these pages of real life, written in cypher all round us, it seems that no sacrifice is too great for a man to make with his right hand, no cruelty too brutal *à la main gauche*. Thus Karma (the reaping of deserts) teaches the Law of the world to the women outside the Hindu nation who both teach it and enforce it on their women.

For woman, with all her faults of pettiness and meanness, can never understand that mood of a man in which he muses on "that awful thing a woman's memory."

All this is part of a great law made for the good of the whole corporate body of mankind. Would that all western girls, as a part and parcel of their freedom, should be taught it thoroughly as the great factor for them in the battle of life, that the power of a woman lies in what she retains. Then might the foe be met on equal terms. And might not the women of England most fitly erect a memorial to H.R.H. the late Duke of Cambridge? The one conspicuous man beside the man in the moon, who did not strike back a blow for a kiss, but was true to a woman

against

is given to few of us to become. She has enjoyed the friendship of kings and princes as well as of the flower of the artistic world, and her books sell by tens of thousands in France. My friend Edouard de Max described her as a very charming woman, far above her *métier*, and in intellect of course far beyond the average woman of the great world, otherwise she would never have attained her position in that half world over which she has reigned supreme so long.

We are told by a great authority that the merit of originality is sincerity, not novelty. Is that why the originality of one who has had courage empresses have envied appeals to one at every turn? She who never permits clocks in her apartments where one is expected to forget the flight of time. But beyond that she has a heart, which few women in society can afford to have. She is a devoted mother, and she has known the passion and the sacrifices of love. It is these qualities, combined with that greatest gift of personal magnetism which all my varied collection of celebrities have in common, which has given her power.

At the time when I met her, the brother

 of

of a European monarch had just called to wish her well in her new life. For she was engaged to marry a man whom many a Belgravian mother would willingly have toiled all many nights to net. She has succeeded in her walk in life far more through her gifts of mind than through her physical attractions, exquisite as they are. Simply dressed, save for her priceless pearls, she was perfectly happy writing her book and loving her small son in very rural surroundings, she who has thought nothing of dissipating enormous fortunes as lightly as she scattered the Normandy sands through her long twining fingers. The contradictions of human nature are defined in her more sharply than in most of us, this woman who would pass from her tiny holiday apartment with the coroneted gold toilet set on the rickety table, to the beach, in a sailor hat and cotton dress, with a string worth £20,000 round her neck. Whose small son kissed his mother's hand with an old-world grace while she talked to me of her *début* at a Paris theatre at which the then Prince of Wales was present, and of her four triumphal visits to St. Petersburg.

Of superior birth, and a countess by marriage with a naval officer of distinction, she

 left

left her home on a small estate in northern France and went to Paris. Her husband offered to forgive all, but she elected to remain away as the leader of a circle in which her gifts brought her supremacy. Poets have sung her beauty, supposed to be the most perfect example of the Madonna type, artists have painted her portraits, the most gifted men of all climes and countries and degrees have poured out their homage at her feet.

When I asked this modern *fille de joie* what she did in her hours of sadness and depression she asked me in return if I knew nothing of the second life, that inner contemplative life of the spirit which makes one independent of the outside one.

And if my more conventional sisters wonder at the breadth and tolerance of my acquaintance list, I would remind them of that most pregnant story of Socrates and the visit he paid Theodote, the leader of the hetairi of ancient Athens, as this fair one is of modern Paris. We are told that he spoke kindly and helpfully to his hostess, recommending her to be sweet and gentle to her lovers, and to love tenderly in return those who loved her, and that he paid a gentle compliment to her beauty as he left her. For was

he

he not an Initiate in the great Lodge of Wisdom? one of the first precepts of which is tolerance, the patient taking of each man and woman as they are, the helping them to a higher evolution. Therefore this ancient Master sought to understand and help Theodote as she *was*, not to condemn her for what she was *not*.

It is in the desire to follow this precept of the Masters of Wisdom, whom I KNOW still live, that I too have sought to understand and sympathise, even where I have condemned and deplored. It is possible that in some future incarnation this star of La Ville Lumière may use the influence she has known how to acquire over men in this life for their good, not for their downfall, may think more of advancing the interests of others than her own. Perhaps the devoted love she has borne to her own son now may then expand into a wider disinterested love for the sons and daughters of others. Perhaps her genius as a writer may then be used to describe something higher, nobler, than the lives of frail women, the peccadilloes of still weaker men. Perhaps the strength and determination of character, also amounting to genius, which took her from her sheltered dreams among the vineyards to make her a

power

power in Paris may then be used on the side of righteousness and truth.

I hope so.

It would seem there is a mystical meaning, something more than meets the eye, in the relations of sex. For this relationship runs all through creation, from the vegetables to gods, who, we are taught, have the dual aspect. Certain it is there is more in this great mystery than physicians' philosophy dreams of, for the experienced observer can at once read her secret in the eyes of a woman who has broken its laws, and the faculty itself professes ignorance of the subtleties lying behind them, of that mysterious land

> Where the harder natures soften
> And the softer harden—
> Certes, such things have been often
> Since we left Eve's Garden.

THE TEMPLE OF SAVITRI

Men marry because they are tired, women because they are curious, both are disappointed.

The Picture of Dorian Gray.

Je donnerais toute ma vie pour une heure.

La Dame aux Camélias.

THE TEMPLE OF SAVITRI*

Love is a sacrament that should be taken kneeling and *Domine non sum dignus* should be on the lips and in the hearts of those who receive it. These words were the swan song, sung in gaol, of one who, living for self alone, having in his own words gone down the primrose path of pleasure to the sound of flutes, now lies in a nameless grave. How different his conception to that of the bride who told the guests assembled at her recent wedding that she had a fit when the fortune-teller said she should only be married once !

The author of that wonderful novel, perhaps the finest of the last century, "The Human Document," has proposed another solution of the problem of marriage for a woman whose marriage has failed, through no fault of her own, to bring her that happiness for which marriage was ordained. His solution in my opinion is fallacious, and all the more dangerous because of the genius with which

* The Indian divinity of marriage.

he

he works out his theories, the exquisite foliage which conceals the bottomless pit and the miry clay which, from my careful observation, always awaits the unwary steps of a woman. I have often wondered how many many lives "The Human Document" has ruined, to how many women when trembling between two decisions, with their fate hanging in the balance between good and evil, its perusal may have sent the scale on the down grade. And the author himself seems to doubt the efficacy of the pleas he puts in Irma's mouth, when he makes Grenville die poisoned from the lips of the man he has wronged. And how many women have been lost by the example of "doing as George Eliot did"? No man lives into himself and if he, and still more fatally she, break a law made for the benefit of the whole corporate body of which we are each one part, members of Christ's body, as He the Christ dwells in our bodies as His Temple, the penalty exacted is none the less awful that the defaulter usually pays in secret. Just as the world never knows of its greatest men, so it never hears of its greatest expiations, exacted in silence by an inexorable Divine justice from a woman's suffused eyes and

and quivering lips. And because the law of God and man is such that it is impossible for a woman to find rest and true happiness outside the institution of marriage, and because the penalties are so terrible, so inexorable, for her who essays to do so, is it not the paramount duty of parents, who have taken upon themselves the responsibilities of a daughter's life, to do their utmost to get her a happy marriage?

Two of the greatest modern authorities of the problems of the sexes have written thus: Dr. Kraft Ebing says: "Woman loves with her whole soul. To woman love is life, to man it is the joy of life. Misfortune in love bruises the heart of man, but it ruins the life of woman, and wrecks her happiness. It is really a psychological question worthy of consideration whether woman can truly love twice in her life." And Max Nordau says: "A mother may be respected by every one as entitled to the highest esteem, she may consider herself as a model of extreme morality, and yet perhaps she tries to overcome her daughter's natural indifference to a suitor by judicious persuasion and advice, after this fashion, that it would be very foolish to throw away such a chance for a comfortable provision for the future, that a

second

second opportunity might never occur," &c. This model mother is an infamous go-between, no more and no less than the old hag who whispers corrupt counsel into the ear of some poor working girl, and is punished by the law when found out. And again he says : " Among the uncultivated violent love for one chosen being is exceedingly rare. Among the upper classes the sexual impulse becomes exclusive and discriminating ; if it were not so the off-spring would not be full of vitality and energy. Hence marriage should be the result of love—otherwise the off-spring of an ill-assorted couple will be bad or mediocre. Goethe expresses love as elective affinity, a word borrowed from chemistry and showing the connection between the elementary processes of nature and of love in man. Why does oxygen unite with potassium ? Why will not nitrogen unite with platinum ? Who can tell us ? And why does a woman want this man and spurn all others ? Marriage is a vessel in which two separate bodies are enclosed together. If there is an affinity the vessel is full of life ; if none the vessel contains death." To how many women whose mothers failed in their duty in the supreme

event

event of their lives have Nordau's curses come home with a terrible application, to those who led by youth and inexperience into loveless marriages have found the woes proclaimed by this modern prophet of righteousness re-echo in the cry of their own hearts. "Oh Man of God, there is death in the pot!"

Yet how few women in society see from this point of view.

The silent brahman girl by the Ganges, who behind her purdah lives out in her own life the Hindu ideal of marriage, the loftiest the world has known. The celebrated courtesan by the Seine who has finished off great financiers and compromised more than one Royal Prince, and yet took laudanum because an obscure and penniless lover proved untrue, these two might understand it, certainly none of the smart and pseudo-smart women one meets at Court and Government Houses, who choose their lovers for their rank and position, and take care to keep that necessary evil, a husband, well *en evidence* as a quietus for scandal.

Again it is the custom among unthinking people to make an old maid the subject for a jest. Should it not rather be for a tear?

A Hindu reformer, on returning from a tour in Europe and America, was welcomed home by an enormous concourse of twenty thousand of his compatriots in Calcutta. In his first address to them he said that what had most impressed him abroad was that while India resounded with the cry of the child widow, in the West the air was heavy with the sob of the celibate.

In this connection I have often wondered if this social evil of the enforced celibacy of the upper classes of English women is part of a collective Karma which they are working out as expiation for the sexual sins of the women of the Roman nation.

We are taught that the law of Karma, the rewarding for good and evil done in the past, operates with nations as well as with individuals. We are also taught that crowds of Romans are reincarnated in the English race and to that fact is due the great similarity between the two races. History repeats itself in the colonisating, extending tendencies of the British, as in the days of Imperial Rome, and in the modern awakening of psychic research exactly as in the days of the Neo-Platonists. Just as in modern England the flower of the

 nation's

nation's thinkers—men such as Sir William Crookes and Mr. Arthur Balfour, have been foremost in this field, so in the classical world all that was socially most brilliant was included in their ranks such as Hypatia, Augustine, and the Emperor Julian.

At the same time we have only to take up any truthful history of ancient Rome and be staggered at the appalling profligacy of the upper classes as a whole, in which the ladies of the aristocracy, headed by their empresses, were the most shameless in their sins.

If it is true that the main body of the British nation consists of Romans living again in the flesh as English people, we have here a terrible example of the inexorable law of Karma, for in no other country in the world's history has the misery of enforced celibacy been so marked as in Great Britain. It is calculated that in the suburb of Kensington, 50 per cent. of the women of the upper classes remain unmarried, this enormous proportion consisting mainly of the daughters of professional men.

Only one modern novelist, Mr. George Moore, has had the courage to deal with this painful

painful subject, and that not in the wisest nor most tasteful manner. In England it seems no one's business to remedy this saddest social problem of to-day. On the contrary many women in society rather intensify it. "The kindest thing is to say nothing about it," said a girl in society when speaking of a mooted engagement, "otherwise some of these women would ask him to dinner and try and stop it!"

The French have their own system which is described by English residents in France to work extremely well. The parents not only provide a *dot* for their daughter but almost from her birth her mother is said to carefully consider the matter of her marriage, and when the time comes to introduce suitable *partis* to her until a mutual preference is shown. So in India a Hindu father considers from his daughter's earliest years whom he shall select for her husband, and observes the boy's youth accordingly, and one Rajput gentleman told me he was glad he had no daughter, only sons, because the responsibility of selecting a husband suitable in all respects was so great. A right marriage for a girl is as important to her life's success as the choice

 of

of a profession for a boy, but in England the mother who takes as much trouble for her daughter's future as for her son's career is the exception rather than the rule.

Herbert in his "Jacula Prudentem" says: "Marry your son when you will; your daughter when you can," and how many women in modern England could write of this system in tears of blood.

THE QUEEN OF SNOWS

The holy flower that blooms on the frozen bed of snow-capped heights.

The Voice of the Silence.

THE QUEEN OF SNOWS

THE route to Mussoorie is through a beautiful jungle where nature runs riot without control, a fitting approach to the pure pleasure centre *par excellence* of India. Having passed holy Hurdwar, where the swift-flowing stream from the snows behind the temple spires rushes away with the sins of sweet little bathers in saris of vermilion, ochre, and lemon, one reaches the Dun. Here the pale pink cloud of the kuchnar blossoms palpitate with joy in the quivering heat, the burning bush of the pallas blazes against the distant blue of the mountains, as a joyous mondaine flashes through an every-day world, the orange parasite of the banda crowns the sombre strength of the peepul, the blue jay flits over the bamboo's feathery forest, the stags' antlers bristle behind the candelabra hedges of the aloe, birds with sharper bills and longer tails than elsewhere in this country of exaggerations perch on the steeples of the giant ant-hills. Some trees have a green froth of flowers

foaming

foaming towards the sky, while others drop blossoms like tears of blood upon the ground, tortuous trunks of chocolate sport a silvery basket-work of stems encircling them, and everywhere a mauve sheet of small blooms carpet the ground.

I once heard a brave officer of Gurkhas, who had given an arm at Dargai, complain that he had been "disappointed in the hills—saw none of this wonderful beauty there." May I remind my gallant friend that the Kingdom of God is within us, that the whole world of the senses lives and moves and has its being in the brain. It is there that the rhododendrons are red, that the meteor shoots, that the deodar sighs. If he go to the hills to meet nature as a lover to the embrace of his mistress, she will not fail to keep the tryst.

Anglo-Indian hotels are in some respects unlike any others in the world, for they are filled with people all members of the same class and of the same way of living, and also full of what Kipling has called "a great knowability." It follows, therefore, that the cross-currents of more lives have been mingled here than in any other similar establishments. Each great hotel has its own special characteristics.

 In

In the Taj Mahal and Annexe Hotels of Bombay how the pulses of life beat quicker than elsewhere where each mail steamer often brings twenty brides to step from these hospitable portals into the boat of life. In the big hotels of Simla every one is filled with a deadly terror of a false move, or an undesirable acquaintance, who may snatch away the coveted prize they have climbed the Hill Difficulty to get, and turn it into a *coup manqué.* This gives the habitués of the summer capital the "Simla face," which one can generally spot from its stony stare, its features carefully trained into a mask lest any should discern the real man or woman inside the puppet of iron-bound convention. But to Mussoorie come those insouciant souls who want nothing but to enjoy, and so the Charleville may be called the palace of pleasure *par excellence* of the Orient. In no other hotel is gaiety so much the business of life as here, pursued "tooth and nail," as a Scotch *padre* put it. Yet what bits of real life have been revealed to me there from the unsealed lips of men and women, in low tones sunk below the waltzes of the string band at dinner, in quiet corners between the giant pots of fuchsias,

 beneath

beneath the sighing palms. From the young officer, the flare of whose wild career had run all along the frontier a byword in the mouths of men, who knew not that he was trying to forget an old passion for a woman whose life had been wrecked by a scoundrel husband long ere they met, broken on a coral reef of the South Seas, so that never might her bark glide into the calm lagoon of a love which for her was faithful and true. Of the tanned veteran of many campaigns, an austere man of sport and shikar, but who was not too dried up to conceive late in life a hopeless love for a woman all laces and languor and dreamy eyes, but who set to work to rule himself with the same iron will he showed to turbulent troopers from the border.

No one can gaze on the snowy range from Mussoorie without thinking of the Hindu God, Shiva, who has his home among the Himalayan peaks. And because to the western mind, ignorant of the teaching of the Hindu religion, the name of Shiva calls up images of terror, violence, and destruction, let me explain that the meaning of the Sanskrit word "Shiva" is "Peace," that he is the Regenerator, not the destroyer, for he is that great

intelligence of the spiritual world who presides over those souls who are sufficiently evolved to have reached the process of involution, who tread the return path back to him. So Shiva, the god of the yogi, of the ascetic, of those who, having seen the futility of all earthly desire, renounce it with its turmoil. They only know the meaning of peace. And yet in one aspect Mahadeva is also the destroyer. He has his home in the burning ground. Strange place for the mightiest to dwell! But all the lower nature has to be consumed before Shiva can bring peace. He can only give his gifts to one who for the sake of their joy has endured the crucifixion of all lower things. One of his gifts is the third eye, that which is represented by the white mark on the forehead of all Shivite devotees, so that he who once receives this gift of Shiva is never more limited in vision by physical sight. With extended seeing comes knowledge of the justice of all things, of the working of the Law, and that brings peace to the soul. So in the picture of Shiva used by his worshippers he is represented to us as an ascetic, sitting in contemplation before a background of the eternal snows. Those travellers who

have

have recently visited the virgin glaciers and dwelt among the untrodden Himalayan peaks have told us that the calm of their unutterable stillness is beyond all words. That is why Mahadeva, having accomplished his work in the burning grounds, is shown to us among the snows.

The snows are not perpetual to one who loves them, for they are ever-changing. In the morning they look like a bride, radiant and sparkling with diamonds in the sunlight, in the afternoon glow of the setting sun like a woman blushing in the first flush of her happiness, later in the twilight like the wan ghosts of a dead love, standing out dim, silent, and wraith-like from the mauve, floating clouds of vain regret. But always sublime, always lofty, always soaring above the sordid earth of every-day life. They are only eternal in their rest, in the soft white bosoms, which, if one could only reach them, seem to promise repose to the most weary head.

Sometimes one gets a sensation difficult to define, a transient touch of that unknown elusive bliss we cannot grasp, lying in the just beyond, which, when we for a moment sense it, catches the breath. It comes at such

instants

instants as when the *voix d'or* of Sarah Bernhardt lets drip in golden tears "Je donnerais toute ma vie pour une heure." With distant waltz music heard on a hot night in the plains of India through the perfume of yellow roses. From the swell of the organ in the choir of Salisbury Cathedral, and the flight of the falcons round the spire, as one stands after evening prayer on the green sward outside that gorgeous memory of an unknown man, while the waning light glitters weirdly through the mullioned windows of the "Wardrobe," and the magnolia gleams wanly from the gables of the King's house where the Merry Monarch brought Sweet Nell. All these bring a breath of the beauty and the romance and the mystery which is around us, illusive, transient, just escaping us, which the old Hebrew sensualist hymned in the line "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my strength."

To how many western women, as to that eastern singer, has come inspiration from the snows. We are told that the most famous adventuress known to two continents in the last century sought rest at Darjiling. Mme. Grand's attractions were celebrated from the

Ganges to the Seine, she who afterwards became the Princess Talleyrand-Perigord, and the two greatest men of her day in India, the Governor-General and the senior member of Council fought a duel together which was popularly, though proved falsely, believed to have been on her account. This woman was the brightest star in a galaxy of which Johnson wrote to Boswell, and which Romney and Gainsborough painted. When Mme. Grand looked last upon the snows ill luck had come to her who had made a Viceroy forget his honour, for Mr. Grand was claiming £1[illegible],000 in the celebrated divorce case he brought against Sir Philip Francis, and received £5000. Did the great adventuress absorb some of their mighty strength as well as their sparkling brilliance, that when she reached Europe she bewitched a French Premier who had escaped the beauty of Recamier, the fascination of de Stael, and for whose marriage with her both Napoleon and Josephine were warm advocates?

Isabel Burton, fresh from the galleries of gold and vermilion of priceless sacred pictures, from the dim mediæval chapel of Wardour, yet loved the golden glory of the Ghauts, hiding

hiding the cathedrals of an alien faith in their womb, born of revivals which stirred the great Mahratta nation from its princes to its ploughmen to the depths.

Annie Besant was honoured by a Lord Chief Justice of England as the greatest orator of our time, when he heard her proclaim in a Piccadilly hall with inspired utterance the existence of divine men, the Elder Brothers of our race, whose home is among the snowy fastnesses. The world has scoffed even at this noble idea of a Perfect Man, the existence of these mighty ones has been made the theme for a Simla Burlesque, yet down upon the head of a disciple bowed in an agony of shame at the blindness of men came fluttering this sublime message, "These hurt us as little as the hiss of the snake the hoary Himalayas!"

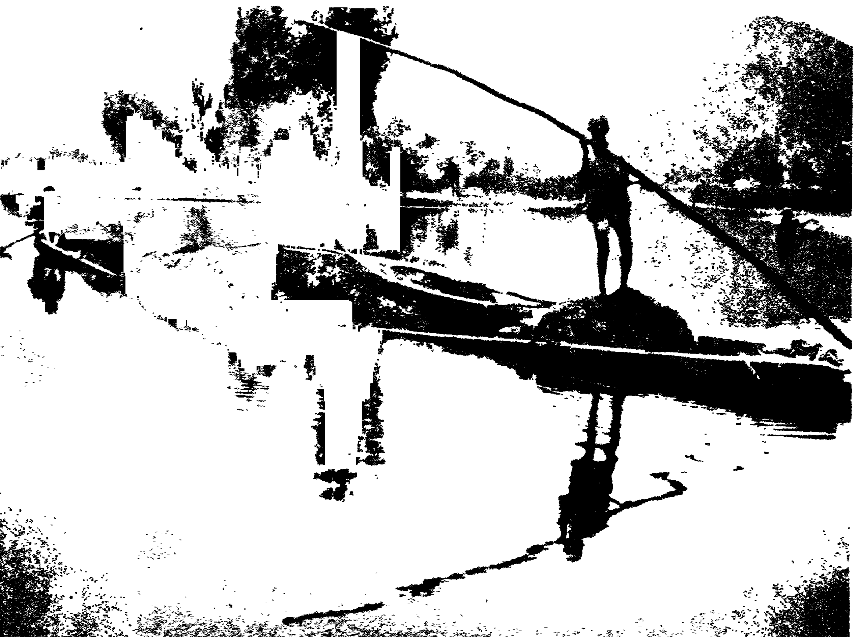
Laurence Hope's loveliest lyrics have been written beneath the Kashmiri hills, and because three continents have been stirred by the work of this woman now dead, a few details of her life may be of interest, gathered from those who knew her personally. To those of us who believe in reincarnation, the wife of General Nicholson, both in the manner of her life and of her death, affords a most striking

 example

example of an eastern woman re-born as a European.

It is one of my great regrets that, though we were stationed for years in the Bombay Presidency, and therefore lived in the very places Laurence Hope has made famous, it so happened that we were never there at the same time, though having missed only by a year at Mhow, and I have many friends who were stationed there, and at other places with her, and knew her well. She appeared about twenty-three years of age, and was the daughter of a Karachi newspaper editor, whose other daughter is "Victoria Cross." She was small, with light brown hair, blue eyes, wore "baby" frocks, and hair tied up like a child's, and had been married very young to General Nicholson, a man of about sixty, so that she was usually mistaken for his daughter. Nevertheless, it was an ideal union of the mind and spirit, for General Nicholson had the same tastes as his wife, and in their private lives they both lived more like easterns than westerns, wearing Indian dress, eating Indian food, sitting upon the floor or reclining upon divans covered with beautiful embroideries—there was scarcely a

chair



ON THE DAHL LAKE, KASHMIR

chair in the house—to study Pushtu romances and poetry from the border, taught them by a Pathan orderly who lived with them.

More Hindu still, they were noted for their compassion for the poor and their help for all in need.

At Dhisa, which is a small station in the Scinde desert, they lived somewhat the life of recluses, only appearing after dusk for the evening drive; and when the General went on inspection duty to Paranpur, seventeen miles distant, his wife would walk out to meet him, and wait for him, sitting beneath the roadside trees. How many exquisite song children were born of those vigils passed alone with the Indian night?

At Mhow, a larger station, General and Mrs. Nicholson entertained lavishly, and were charming to the whole of society; but the girl-wife was always noted for her devotion to her husband—full of thought for him, his health, and his comfort; and her *chef-d'œuvre* as a painter, as well as her apotheosis as a poet, was a portrait of him. Nevertheless, she was considered a most brilliant conversationalist, and people called her the most interesting woman they had ever met.

 The

The lady to whom I am indebted for most of these details knew Mrs. Nicholson intimately, having occupied the bungalow opposite to hers at Mhow, and she tells me that Mrs. Nicholson's favourite drive there, where she met her carriage every evening, was along the Simrole Road—"Simrole Tank!"

Indian friends say that Laurence Hope's poetry expresses a profound knowledge of, as well as an intense love for, the life of the East; and as one reads it, and hears of that life "poured out across his grave," one wonders instinctively how often she had been "sati" * for her husband before.

What varying tributes have been offered all over the world to the memory of the wife of Malcolm Nicholson!

Women on solitary ranches have offered the wild flowers of wilder western prairies. Millionairesses among the languorous lilies of heated Boston boudoirs have envied her a passion all their dollars could not buy. Maharanis have offered her roses on sunlit marble terraces, and marvelled that a pale-faced woman should read their lives so well. Gold kings and silver paupers among the soft flannel

* A widow who burns herself on the pyre.

flowers of the Australian bush have blest her for opening to their tired eyes a world in which the sordid has no part. In every country and in every clime to her memory men and women have brought the perfumed offering, because she alone amongst the daughters of to-day has had the courage of a love which was stronger than death.

You, to whom the gods had given such gifts of mind and body that all men were fascinated by your conversation as by a siren's voice ; all women enthralled by your divine compassion for those in need, who daily in the Hindu Temple across the maidan * sought for strength for right ; who meditated on doing good, your bare feet dipping in the marble fountain of your bungalow, whose love for your lord was so great that, "meeting too late to save," you deemed it better to live with him in the Sun Mansions than to endure a living death on earth alone ; would it have brought you consolation, who thought your fate was cruel, could you have known that your voice, eloquent in the silence of death, would echo all over the world in the souls of countless men and women who are children of

* Grass plain.

the

the East by nature as the Voice of the Orient itself?

By what varied natures, and in what different surroundings, have the Persian poets been loved! Once in a house whose four walls enclosed, both literally and metaphorically, the core of Paris, Bernhardt's greatest colleague, De Max, told me how the poems of the old tentmaker of the rose-garden were read in modern Paris.

From this young Parisian, who, with the thoroughness bred of his aristocratic blood, has lived out the life of Paris, so that his characters upon the stage pale before the parts he plays every day, lying prostrated upon a couch, dressed in a sort of Roman toga, while the rain pattered down on the laurel leaves outside the open window—how far a cry to where the Anglo-Indian woman studied the same lines in a sari upon Bokhara-draped divans, surrounded by the flowers of the jungle, and whose pure love was stronger than death.

Round Mussoorie even the flowers are strange in this country of contradictions. One of the loveliest shrubs has no blossoms —only Nile-green leaves shading into du Barri pink at the bush summit. The brightest

 blooms

blooms are the humblest, for the brown earth is covered with turquoise, and mauve, and amber stars. The hawthorn and the yellow jessamine are scentless, while the eglantine perfume is subtle as a concealed motive. This flower always reminds me of a woman who once did the Mussoorie season, and who called herself by that fantastic name. Eglantine Warpe was the elderly wife of an elderly officer of high rank, who, though long retired, returned by her request for the Mussoorie season, because they could not find any European city sufficiently gay. Death, in robbing Eglantine at one fell stroke of all her children by fever, had left her as a ghastly exchange a kind of perpetual youth. Though long crowned by grey hair, she remained young in mind for ever, and as eager for gaiety as when in her spring-time. Her husband, who got old like other men, was the unfortunate victim of this strange state of affairs. Worn out by age and fatigue, he often fell asleep at a banquet where his wife was the bright particular star. He died doing the Cairo season.

STONES OF DELHI

I met a hundred men on the road to Delhi and they were all my brothers.

Indian Saw.



Photo by Jaau Kissen

THE WORLD'S LOVELIEST STREET

STONES OF DELHI

I

> "May you be tortured living, burned when dead,
> Your camels die, and virtue leave your wife."
> But he, who sat beneath the Peepul, said:
> "Why wish him more than average human life?"
>
> *At Simrole Tank.*

It is said that the Jumna is connected with our Karma, with the rewards and punishments of the life of the flesh, as the Ganges bears us to the life of the spirit. That on its banks is the City of Retribution as by the Gunga is the City of Refuge. In Kashi we are told there are temples so holy that he who once crosses their portals is absolved from his past for evermore, but in Indrasprastha the Avenging Angel spares not.

What strange scenes have those winding waters witnessed from the days when Timur the Moghul prayed in the wayside mosque their ripples lap, to when Theophilus Metcalfe gazed across their floods in fear of the last Moghul behind the rose-red turret walls.

Seen

Seen first by clairvoyant vision one whole year before I beheld them by physical sight, to me those waters will waft memories till death comes.

The orange creeper bignonia venusta hung in cascades of fiery passion from the peepul to cool its flames below in the snow drifts of the syringa's maiden purity. The kiosks in the Queen's Gardens rose grey and soothing from the clamorous scarlets of the hibiscus, the creamy tubes of the millingtonia formed a pattern as a bridal veil against the azure sky, as I drove through to gain the Chandni Chowk, one of the world's richest streets, to try to rescue a friend and his career from the harpies who sought to devour him.

He came from a grand old Irish stock, from men who traced their pedigree to Noah's Ark. He had been a friend of childhood's days, and with the thoroughness characteristic of his race he had gone to the devil by the most direct route. None of the famous trio had been denied. In the soft sensuous atmosphere of Shanghai, so far away from Charing Cross that all thoughts of the restraints of English life vanish, where yellow-faced celestials living on dogs, cats, and mice produce ivories and

embroideries and enamels of a poet's dream, in a country with a history and a wisdom hoarier even than that of Hindustan, but a race of men in their decadence with the morals of monkeys, there at the other side of the world, where the world seems turned upside down, where right is wrong and wrong is right, he had tossed away health and strength and fortune in the giddy swing of a centre of the most senseless society on earth.

> It had much of glamour might;
> Could make a ladye seem a knight;
> The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
> Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
> A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
> A sheeling seem a palace large,
> And youth seem age, and age seem youth:
> All was delusion, nought was truth.

Later our ways had crossed, too late to save.

In Bombay, the most alluring of all cities, where the water of the ocean's loveliest bay laps against the garden walls, where the rooks caw overhead in the banyans, and the yellow lights in the Yacht Club gleam as from a giant Chinese toy, there in the fateful city, the keystone of an empire, our ways had met a moment, to recognise and part.

 Once

Once more we crossed, in the most regal of cities, at that greatest of all meetings, the Imperial Durbar, the scene that most wondrous of all spectacles, the great State Ball. Round the white canvas city of the camp ran the toy railway right to the turret walls, even to the blood-red halls of the Moghul, where the silver shimmering draperies I had carried bravely into the Royal Presence of England seemed almost like Cinderella's rags amidst that gorgeous array of the most splendid of every nation under Heaven, assembled at the bidding of the strongest man and the loveliest woman of our generation.

The grass grows now over the site of that phantom city. The Durbar arena itself is naught but a low monsoon-washed mound of earth, the railway, the polo grounds, the exhibitions, the spectacles, the crowds, the troops, the bands, have vanished like a fairy dream, but the memories of that meeting of all meetings abide still and have moulded the destinies of men and women in lives unnumbered.

Yet once more, for the third time, we met, and again in Imperial Delhi, in a smart modern hotel on the outskirts of the city, the



Photo by Mendelssohn

AFTER THEIR MAJESTIES' COURT, CORONATION WEEK, JUNE 1902

the Anglo-Indian Home of Kings, where from the uttermost parts of the earth royalties do congregate and sovereigns do holiday make, and princesses and duchesses are of small account.

The hotel was for once filled with soldiers instead of sightseers, of bronzed and determined looking men in sun helmets instead of mannikins with Murray's Guides and curls, who explained they had never done a day's work to keep a better man out, and whose mammas paid them £3000 a year to keep away from home, for it was the time of the tardy unveiling of a monument to John Nicholson, and from every part of India officers of each regiment he had led from the Ridge to death or glory were present that day.

The Bayard of India stood in his accustomed attitude and in his old-time garb facing the Kashmir Gate, veiled only by the flag he died for, held equally by a white soldier and a dusky Sepoy, immovable on each side as "Nikkleseyn" himself. A majestic sight, and the red and white and yellow roses of the garden breathed out their gladdest perfumes on the quivering afternoon heat, and the Viceroy

Viceroy excelled himself in a soldier's brief epitome of a soldier's life, and the German Royalty present was gracious in his smiles, and the blue eyes of the hofgeborn barons on his staff seemed not inimical to England's fair.

The Chandni Chowk was blazing in colour, the scent of the musk melons in the fruit bazaar was rich to faintness, those melons which brought tears of home memories and loneliness to Baber's eyes, a green parrot with a scarlet bill nestled among the wine-coloured leaves of the oedepia bicolor, a marriage procession entering the Dariba, the boy bridegroom seated on a grey horse with cloth of gold jacket and many garlands of the Arabian jasmine, the sweet white blossoms sacred to Shri Krishna, the god of earthly love, filled the air with its overpowering tomtoms of triumph as I climbed the steep stairs leading to an upper story whose balcony overhung the world's loveliest street, to hold colloquy with a commercial friend as to how we could help most in the hour of need.

For the time we failed. Will the seeds sown upon those Jumna floods return in after days?

Alla-o-Din

Alla-o-Din set forth from Delhi, drawn by the beauty of a woman he had never seen, and whom he beheld only in mirrors when he reached Chittore, that City set on a hill, whose light can never be hid, the holiest upon earth. The hill of Calvary is sacred for evermore, because one Divine Man suffered there, but the hill of Chittore is holier still, because its earth has three times been drenched with the blood of a whole nation who preferred a glorious death to shame. For three times have the women of Chittore, in a procession of many thousands, led by their Queens and Princesses, passed singing to the pyre ; and three times have the men, clad in the ascetic's robe, perished to the last one before the enemy was admitted to the gate.

So that the most callous, the most cynical, when approaching Chittore, the City of the Children of the Sun, must feel that the place whereon they stand is holy ground.

It was through the streets of Delhi that Aurungzeb, the iconoclast, passed from his father's dream-like palace to the Jama Musjid, a fanatic of fanatics, ready to burn and destroy for the faith ; yet he too must have had softer moments, for even he, and also Humayun,

 accepted

accepted the gauges and became the *cavaliere servantes* of Rajput princesses; Humayun leaving his own conquests in Bengal to hasten to the succour of the Queen Mother of Chittore. When the Rajput dame sent her gauge of a bracelet to her "brother" or protector, the return gauge was usually a corset sewn with pearls, as a sign of protection, often accompanied by the gift of a province. These fierce Mahomedan warriors entered with spirit into this chivalrous Rajput custom, but the lady was only allowed to appeal to their protection in cases of extreme danger.

Of the women of Delhi, one thinks instinctively first of Sultana Raziyah, the only Empress of all India before Queen Victoria, whom her father considered more worthy of the throne than her brethren. Lovely and learned, ruling her vast dominions with firmness and judgment, so that the quaint historian of those days admits her only fault was to have been born of the wrong sex, yet she deemed an empire, even life, well lost for love when she preferred the young Abyssinian slave whom she had made master of her house, and thought death sweeter than life without him when the jealous Afghan generals killed her for his sake.

 But

But he who has made his love immortal, enshrined in a marble memory so peerless that all lovers from East and West have worshipped at its delicate inlaid shrine, and will do so for all time, he who built the Taj, designed it, and planned it at Delhi, Shah Jehan, lost the lady of the Taj only one short year after ascending the throne. She had followed her Imperial lover on an expedition to the far Deccan, and died on the return journey.

He has been handed down to us in history as a hard and an austere man. He had waded to a throne through seas of blood, but his home-life was so perfect that when she, who was its radiance, died, he enshrined her in such a memorial as no other woman in the world had had before, nor shall have again.

Arjumand came of a brilliant family. Her grandfather, Itmad-ud-Dowlah, was a Persian adventurer, who shuffled his cards so cleverly at the Moghul Court that his daughter became an Empress, his son a great minister, his granddaughter the Lady of the Taj. Did she unite the brains of old Itmad to the beauty of her aunt, the Light of the World ?

When Arjumand died, her imperial lover left Agra and founded the new city of Delhi.

 His

His Court there was of such unrivalled splendour as the world had never seen before nor shall see again. No European king has ever *lived in such gorgeous surroundings. Jewellers* ransacked East and West to enrich the Peacock Throne. Artists came from the ends of the earth to minister to his pleasure. For him Austin of Bordeaux fashioned his cunningest birds and beasts. He was the Great Moghul. But the historian tells us he seldom smiled, for he was also the lover of Arjumand, who had left him. He sat upon a seat valued at £6,000,000, but he found it a hard resting-place after her bosom. The Koh-i-Noor blazed beside him, but it seemed dim and tawdry to him whose life a woman's eyes had brightened. He held a glorious Court, but his mind was far away planning the mausoleum of his well-beloved.

He built the Jama Musjid, but when he saw the pigeons circling, the forbears of those we see to-day, he prayed them to bear his soul away to rest with her. Other bright eyes moved him, other arms caressed him in those little rooms behind the marble screen where the scales of justice are, the loveliest set of rooms in all the world. Other forms as

 graceful

graceful passed to the inlaid baths he built, such baths as never women bathed in elsewhere; the *prima donna*, Bai Kokal, sang her sweetest, but when he gazed from the Jasmine Tower upon the blue Jumna far beneath, the man's soul was cast as bread upon the waters, praying them to return him to her who sleeps beside its ripples.

Delhi is essentially the City of Pageants, the scene of the most imposing spectacles the world has known. From time immemorial it has been so, since the days of the Pandu Prince Yudisthira, who founded that city of Indras-prastha, which is now called Delhi, and signalised it by celebrating the Aswamedha, or horse sacrifice, the most magnificent ceremonial ever seen, and one which is older than history itself. The father of history says that the great Grete of Central Asia deemed it right to offer the swiftest of created beings to the swiftest of uncreated beings, and so the Solar Princes, the Royal children of the Sun, have since the days of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* offered the milk-white steed of the sun on the banks of the Jumna and Ganges. The Dasaswamedha Ghat at Benares is so named because a King of Kashi performed this

 tremendous

tremendous ceremonial not once but three times in expiation of his mother's sin. As in the Soonair festival, every office in the rites, from that of scullion and porter, is performed by royalty. Perhaps the Aswamedha has never since been celebrated so royally as when the steed of sacrifice was liberated under the care of the undying hero Arjuna, and roamed for a year as a challenge of supremacy, until the sun had again entered the winter solstice, when all the Kings of India were summoned to witness the sacrifice. The great rival race of the Kurus burned with envy at this challenge of the Pandus, and this was the origin of the greatest war of the world's history, and the greatest book in the world which records it, the "Mahabharata."

Modern princes fight shy of a ceremony which has often been attended by such fatal results, and always by so much expense, and the last to perform it was Raja Jey Singh of Amber, that celebrated royal astronomer, who became the foremost authority in his favourite science both in Europe and Asia.

And I like to think of Aurungzeb, the austere son of the greatest man of pleasure in Asia, passing on Fridays from the Lahore Gate

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of his rose-red palace to Asia's greatest mosque for prayer. Even now there is no lovelier sight on earth than the Jama Musjid on a Friday, when all the ten thousand worshippers are each clad in a different hue. But those were statelier days, when Aurungzeb, sometimes on his elephant decorated with rich trappings and covered with a canopy, and sometimes on a throne gleaming with azure and gold placed on a litter of scarlet and gold brocade, and followed by his *Omrahs* on horseback and in *palkis*, and by silver mace-bearers, passed through the troop-lined streets and halted at the gates. And Bernier tells us that his sister, Roshanara, went on her elephant, seated in a turret blazing with gold and azure, the animal bearing massive bells of silver and decked with curious embroideries and costly trappings, and with a young female slave plying a peacock's tail to remove dust and flies, and followed by over fifty other elephants nearly equally resplendent, bearing the noblest ladies in the land, and followed by crowds of attendants both horse and foot, looked so lovely that the Indian poets compared them to goddesses come again to earth.

But surely that eastern princess of Delhi's

 palmy

palmy days, when the great Moghul Empire blazed with a magnificence, alas, so soon to die, was not fairer than that modern woman of the far West, who headed the opening procession of the Durbar, the greatest spectacle our day will see.

Delhi is the city of scents as well as the city of doves. In the hot weather evenings the perfumes from the neams and oleanders and a myriad other gorgeous tropical blooms are almost overpowering. In no other of the world's cities have I known nature so to simulate an exquisite perfumer's shop. Walking beneath the arcades of neams, with their blooms like green feathers, and the oleanders, tossing rose du Barri bouquets in the air ; the perfumes are sweet to cruelty if the inner life is void of delight. And all around the city rises the glad chorus of thousands of doves happy in the love and the companionship which the summer and the scents have brought. In no other eastern city that I know are the doves so glad as in Delhi. There, where human lovers have known the greatest heights and depths of passion, so also seems the animal creation most exultant in its loves.

This city of dreams is the most oriental

of

of cities. Other Indian towns the West has touched and contaminated with steam and motor-cars, but Delhi, dreaming in the heart of India's great continent, seems jealously guarded as the Orient's own. In the lurid days of the mutiny every vestige of the West vanished here with a celerity unequalled elsewhere, and so in these days of outer peace the silent pad of the camels' long file patrols the streets and the cactus riots almost over the cantonment lines.

Only a Zola or a Hichens could describe the Roshanara Gardens, planted by one of the two daughters of the Great Moghul, who, both in life and death presented so marked a contrast. Jehanara, devoted to her father, following him into captivity, and buried by her own wish with only the green sod above her royal head. Roshanara, planting a garden of dreamlike loveliness, filling her life in fleeting passions, living in the clash of battles, and moving in the triumphal progress of the conqueror of the world.

Delhi is the city of mystery. On the road to its grandest mausoleum, where the brave heart of Humayun is at rest, one passes Indrapat, with its high forbidding walls, its narrow

 slit-like

slit-like gates, exquisitely tiled, looking as though they must lead into some city of enchanted wonder, with the mysterious sign of the interlaced triangles above.

And the solitary visitor who penetrates that enchanted fortress finds among the jungly lanes the most perfect mosque in all the seven Delhis, the gem left by the Tiger King, Shere Shah.

Oh, glorious land of India! Everywhere, both in hills and plains, colour and mystery and wonder abound, till words are weak, and pen and pencil fail. But nowhere have I seen aught to fire the imagination quicker than Indrapat's walls in the twilight, when the gates open narrowly to admit returning wanderers, and the sunset gilds the scarlet draperies of the women, and the *muezzin* mounts the minarets of Shere Shah.

II

THE INDIAN CAMPANILE

THE lovely Ktab, as all the world knows, is secondary in history to the plain iron pillar of the Pandus, which, erected to Vishnu, dates from the dawn of Delhi history, and was said to have its pedestal fixed in Hades, or on the head of the great world-serpent—at any rate, in regions behind the veil. When an impious Hotspur prince wished to prove the truth of this tradition, "blood gushed up from the earth's centre; the pillar became loose" (dhilli), as did the fortunes of his house from such impiety. So that the very name of Delhi is a warning to all not to probe their illusions too deeply. The Pandus, or Pale Ones, were the grandchildren of that eastern Princess Ambalika, who, on pressure from the Queen-Mother, consented to a marriage with the great sage Vyasa in the hope that a worthy heir might be born to the royal house. The sage had become of so forbidding an appearance from his austerities, that he said if the princess could forget his

 ugliness

ugliness of person because of his spiritual greatness, he would forego the year of purification he would otherwise have imposed on her. "My ugliness," he said, "shall in her case be the austerest of penances." But the poor girl, "beholding the Rishi, became pale with fear," hence the paleness of the five heroic brothers who were the conquerors in the Great War waged at Delhi, which, by destroying the Kshattrya caste, paved the way for India's conquest and fall. And so the Hindu nation, in its death-throes, gave birth as a swan's song to the world's greatest book, the "Mahahbharata"; and of all the discourses bequeathed to us by the great ones of the past, none can thrill more deeply than that of Bhishma on duty in the various walks of life. He was chosen of the gods to give it because he had never failed in duty.

They were giants in those days, and refusing soft cushions brought to him, the dying hero gave it from his bed of arrows, waiting till the sun should turn into the northern course, the appointed time for him to die.

Yudisthira, the eldest grandson of the Princess and the sage, founded Indrasprastha, which

which afterwards became Delhi, and signalised it by the first performance here of the Aswa-medha, or horse sacrifice. All the royalties of India attended, and kings became scullions and princes were porters at the festival.

The last Pandu prince was Prithiraj, whose life was one succession of feats of arms and gallantry. There are many of the world's love-stories which will never fade away, albeit we are told that the men and women of to-day no longer feel deeply, that a *grande passion* is a thing of the past. Still, no one made of flesh and blood can approach the Indian Campanile without a tribute of memory to those immortal lovers who once lived there: to Prithiraj, soldier and poet; to Sunjogta, fairest of women and profoundest of philosophers.

Her father was the Rahtore King of Canouj. He had an army of eighty thousand men in armour, thirty thousand horse, covered with quilted mail, three hundred thousand infantry, two hundred thousand bowman with battleaxes; besides a cloud of elephants bearing warriors. He had made eight kings of the north prisoners, and had divine honours paid to him in the "Soonair" rites. Again,

every

every prince in the land was invited to assist, and all India was agitated by the magnificence of the festival, which was to conclude with the marriage of the King's daughter, who, according to custom, was to make her choice from the chivalry of India. Prithiraj having refused to acknowledge the supremacy of Sunjogta's father, the latter made his effigy in gold, and made it a "porter of the hall."

Prithiraj determined to enjoy love and revenge at the same time, for he had seen Sunjogta, and after her all other women were as the light of common day after the midnight sun. In his own words, he determined "to spoil the sacrifice, and bear away the fair maid of Conouj from the halls, though beset by all the heroes of Hind." Hot with desire, he left his palace of Indraprastha beside the Jumna, and a desperate fight of five days took place. "He preserved his prize, he gained immortal renown, but he lost the sinews of Delhi." As, long after, following in his footsteps, Alla-o-Din also left Delhi to commit that sin of sins, the sack of Chittore, as, in our own day, the uncrowned King of Ireland tossed away a nation's independence, so also Prithiraj, last of his line, sacrificed the

whole

whole Hindu Empire all for the sake of a woman.

The passion of Prithiraj was reciprocated. She rejected all the assembled suitors, and threw the garland of marriage round his neck, mixed in the five days' combat against her father's army, and, after an awful carnage on both sides, lulled her lover into neglect of princely duty.

But both the kingdoms of Canouj and Indraprastha were ruined by the conflict, and while Prithiraj and his bride were in the first days of their happiness, the Ghori Sultan was already knocking at their door.

Prithiraj left his warriors assembled in council to seek advice from this woman for whose sake he had brought these calamities upon himself and people. But she, who had so far only shown him the sweetness of the woman, now revealed the wisdom of the sage in her immortal reply: "Who asks a woman for advice, the world deems their understanding shallow; even when truths issue from their lips, none listen thereto. Yet what is the world without woman? We have the forms of Satti with the fire of Shiva; we are at once thieves and sanctuaries; we are

are vessels of virtue and vice; of knowledge and ignorance. The man of wisdom, the astrologer, can from the books calculate the motion and course of the stars, but in the book of woman he is ignorant; and this not a saying of to-day—it ever has been so; our book has not been mastered, therefore to hide their ignorance they say in woman there is no wisdom! Yet woman shares your joys and your sorrows. Even when you depart for the mansions of the sun, we part not. Hunger and thirst we cheerfully partake with you: we are as the lakes of which you are the swans; what are you when absent from our bosoms?"

In this speech Sunjogta indicates what her life expresses perhaps more clearly than that of any other woman—the dual nature of woman. She who could charm with such intoxication that a five days' bloody battle was accounted child's play for her sake, when the hour of danger dawned inspired her lover with the sublime counsel. "Victory and fame to my lord! Oh, Sun of the Chohans, in glory or in pleasure, who has tasted so deeply as you? To die is the destiny not only of man, but of the gods; all desire to throw

 off

off the old garment; but to die well is to live for ever: think not of self, but of immortality, I will be your half-body in the mansions of the Sun."

In the last great battle which subjugated India, Sunjogta armed her lord for the encounter. In vain she sought the rings of his corselet: her eyes were fixed on the face of the Chohan as those of the famished wretch who finds a piece of gold. As he left her to head Delhi's heroes, she who had drunk so deeply of the wine of love vowed that henceforward water only should sustain her. With the clairvoyance which a great passion brings, she predicted, "I shall see him again in the region of Suriya (the sun), but never more in Yoginipur."

Prithiraj was slain. Sunjogta mounted the pyre.

A great passion sanctifies a place, because a surpassing love for another is always nobler than absorption in self. As the loves of Hero and Leander have made the Hellespont waters holy for all time; as Heloise and Abelard have sounded a song of heavenly music from the grey stones of a mediæval monastery; as Dante, in his own more mystical love of Beatrice,

could

could not forget beneath the Florence Campanile of Giotto the more hapless loves of Paolo and Francesco; so we can never approach the Ktab without a tribute to those deathless lovers of Asia. It has been remarked that the country of Hindustan is a land of extremes in both worlds, physical and spiritual; that as it has loftier mountains and deeper valleys than any other, so it has produced mightier sages, viler vices. That the atmosphere of India acts as a forcing-house on the character of those who live in it, both European and native, as a hothouse forces growths, both beautiful and baneful. So Prithiraj and Sunjogta may perhaps stand as typical of their race, and of their country, as the concentrated essence of the spirit of India, as extremists in the ecstasies of their passion, the height of their renunciation. When we last visited the Ktab, it was in the rains. No harsh American twang aroused the peacock's wail, no hideous apparition in travelling tweeds hunted the jackals away from the deserted corridors and the pointed arches of the great mosque. For Islam had confiscated the halls where Prithiraj and Sunjogta loved. But the exquisite stone carvings of

 Krishna,

Krishna, the God of Love, as well as the plain Iron Pillar of the Pandus, remain to testify of them. And the Ktab itself, which Bishop Heber has described as the world's most glorious tower, its lovely red pillar pointing ever upwards as the stamen of a gorgeous flower, is a not unworthy memorial of a passion whose presence, as long as men and women have pulse to feel and heart to beat, can never pass away.

Amir Khusru, the Delhi Singer, whose grave six centuries old is still perfumed with roses sweet as his songs, has thus sung of the Ktab Mosque "The mosque of it is the depository of the grace of God, the music ot the prayer of it reaches to the moon."

The Ktab contains two tombs. One is the oldest tomb in India. This, thirty feet square inside, of the same glorious red stone, and wondrously carved, was erected by Sultana Raziyah to her father, the Emperor Altamsh, who had considered her worthier of the throne than her brethren. When his son, having killed his brother, sought for Raziyah, she appeared garbed in the suppliant's robe before her people on the terrace of the palace at the Ktab, and they rose as one man to acclaim her

her Empress of India. Raziyah ordered her brother to be killed in his turn, saying "the slayer must be slain." But Raziyah, with all her man's strength, proved herself a mortal woman, for she was killed, after a brief four years' reign, by the jealous Governor of Lahore, because she had loved a young Abyssinian slave not wisely but too well. So El Malika Raziyah, first Empress of India, now lies in a lonely little grave in the deserted city of Ferozabad, beside the winding Jumna. The other tomb is that of Ala-o-Din, who built the Alai Darwasa, which Fergusson considers in its lovely carving and many colourings to be one cf the most beautiful specimens of polychromatic decoration in the whole world. Ala-o-Din, fierce warrior and parricide as he was, seems to have had an eye for the beautiful, for he set out from his palace by the Ktab, bound for Chittore with the object of possessing the beauty of a woman he had never seen, only heard of in a legend. After a siege long and fruitless as that of Troy he limited his demands to only a view this Hindu Helen in mirrors.

He entered Chittore slightly guarded, for he knew that Rajput honour never betrayed,

and

and was escorted back after the looking-glass interview by the husband of the fair, Bheemsi.

But Moghul honour was of different stuff, and at the foot of the fortress Bheemsi was secured and captured, and his liberty made dependent on the surrender of his wife Pudmini.

The Rajputs determined to meet treachery in the same spirit, and Pudmini was escorted by seven hundred litters of "handmaids" each borne by six armed "porters." Half an hour was granted for a farewell interview between Bheemsi and his bride, while the seven hundred covered their retreat. Pursuit followed, and the choicest heroes of Chittore met the assault. This is the "half sack" of Chittore.

When Ala-ud-din at length entered the city he left standing only the dwelling of Bheemsi and Pudmini.

As one wanders among the stones of Delhi, so eloquent of these men and women of the past, who lived where we live, breathed the same air, and saw the Jumna wind as we watch it to-day, one cannot but contrast the fierce flame of their passions with the almost tawdry emotions of to-day, when love is written of in our literature as "a spasm of

the

the nerves," is spoken of in our society with a smile.

The glare of the electric light from the Chandni Chowk now reflects on the grave El Malika Raziyah, motor-cars screech through the defences of Prithiraj, a nineteenth-century engineering triumph spans the waters which once bore away on their zephyrs the sighs of Sunjogta, which cooled the hot blood currents of Ala-o-Din.

But which generation has most truly lived?

III

AN EASTERN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The men and women who have lived in Delhi make fiction dull, and second to none appeals to our imagination the life of Humayun, as his tomb makes him of all Delhi heroes most beautiful in death.

The Mahomedan Kings of India were as sumptuous in their death shrines as in their palaces during life, and each famous tomb has its own special characteristics. The Gol Gombaz, the tomb of Mahomed Shah of Bijapur, the Charles II. of India, is noted for its enormous size. It has the largest dome in the world, larger even than that of the Pantheon of Rome. It is as though Mahomed, the Merry Monarch, mindful of death in the midst of his mistresses and his minstrels, was desperately determined at all costs that his name should live in the minds of men Was he uncertain of the after life? At any rate, the tomb of the great sybarite or the Deccan dominates the land for miles round.

round. The shrine of his son Ibrahim Rauza is remarkable for its exquisite beauty of detail, its refinement of finish, its poetry in stone, and its dream-like garden, making the great Gol Gombaz of his father in the desert almost blatantly vulgar, and for repeating the inscription which runs in the marble halls by the Jumna: "If there be a paradise on earth, it is here." The tomb of Akbar is all commanding, as he himself was in life; but the memory of the Persian adventurer Itmad-ud-Dowlah, the father of empresses, is enshrined in marbles woven of intricacy and subtlety, as the old man shuffled his threads in the web of fate during his earth life. In the Taj Mahal the light of the world lives again in such exquisite poetry that Chicago pork-packers have been seen to weep at this contrast to their own sordid lives. But Humayun's tomb is to the memory of the strong man, and so it to-day appeals to men of action; and a distinguished soldier told me that of all Delhi's memorials he most admired this; that he had seen it at all hours and from all points of view, but that it looked best at earliest dawn from across the river.

While a brave heart lies at rest there, and

it

it is also the grave of the greatest race of warriors the world has known, Humayun's tomb may be called the Westminster Abbey of the House of Timur. The tomb is encircled by a lovely garden of flowers, perhaps because it was built by the devoted love of a woman for the man of her choice, for Humayun, notwithstanding a stormy life, had known a softer side to his chequered career. Shortly before the birth of his son, Akbar, India's greatest King, he had fled with his young wife almost alone through the dreary Scinde desert, leading her palfrey and heartening her from day to day till the last day came and he had to leave her in a hill fortress where their immortal son saw the light, that son who in other days and under a different *régime* gave inspiration to India's greatest Viceroy.

Again he left his own conquests in Bengal at a critical moment to hasten to the help of the Queen Mother of Chittore, when she had sent him her gauge and made him her bracelet-brother. And he met his death when absorbed in watching the transit of Venus; he slipped down the stairs of his observatory tower when summoned by the evening call to prayer. His son, Akbar the Great, paid the

 greater

greater part of the cost of the tomb which his mother erected in memory of her life's romance, and Haji Begum, after her pilgrimage to Mecca in search of spiritual joys, now that earthly pleasure was dead, was put in charge of her husband's tomb, and a college of learning was held in the rooms of the dome and many men of learning and influence lived there.

In Haji Begum's garden are planted flowers as varied in their hue as the colour of the hours of her chequered life. There hang the red tubes of the malpingia with the hot spicy smell of expectancy; there grow the point-settia, gultasbi, and hibiscus, all glorious in various tones of scarlet, as fiery flames and flamingo birds. There too creeps the mourning pachpati, with flowers and leaves in dull hues of mauves and greens as of a persistent grief.

The small yellow puff-balls of the kika, and the green-flowered variety where the shy blossoms in their retirement give out a sweeter smell, and the treacherous neams with their pale feathery fronds secreted in ambush, but giving scents which breed madness in the brain. The gardenia, whose flowers of snow-

 drift

drift purity, of delicate and elusive perfume, suggest a bouquet for a lady of high degree. The tremendous oleander, suggesting the boudoir of a courtesan *de haut étage*, with its rose du Barri tints, its overpowering essence. Then, too, the caneer flowers with pale green shading into yellow, with faint bitter smell, as of a woman's jealousy which tries to hide, the five-pointed vellum stars of the dudh flower, brightening the barren wastes of the jungle as the milk of human kindness sweetens the cares of life. The blue-veined slippers of the lelum, dainty as the foot-gear of a fairy princess, the long white trumpets of the datura with its foul foliage, malodorous as a woman who has made the great mistake.

All these and many more flourish in the garden which Haji Begum planted in memory of her love, and one wonders if she and Humayun did not learn from Baber the lore of flowers he knew so well. For Baber, the father of the Humayun, was a many-sided man. The two great scourges of Asia had been Chingiz and Timur. Baber united their fiery blood to Persian culture and was a noted lover of flowers. In one place he relates in his

 journals

journals he found thirty-three kinds of tulips.

In his favourite "Garden of Fidelity" orange trees and pomegranates clustered round a lake, and the carpet was soft with clover. At the "Fountain of the Three Friends" three kinds of trees grew: planes, dates, and the flowering "archwan," the only place where the last two grew. Baber said he knew no place on earth to compare with it when the yellow and red of the flowers appeared. He loved colour. He built on the side of a hill near Cabul a little cistern of red granite, and this he filled from time to time with red wine. On the sides of the cistern he chiselled:

> Sweet is the New Year's coming,
> Sweet is the smiling Spring,
> Sweet is the juice of the mellow grape,
> Sweeter far the voice of Love,
> O! Baber, seize life's pleasures,
> Which, once departed, can never, alas! return.

To his son Humayun he gave as his earliest guerdon the Koh-i-Noor, which the dutiful son had brought to his father, given him by the Raja Bikramajit, in return for aid. It was valued at "half the daily expenditure of the whole world." Later Baber gave Humayun

his

his life. He prayed that God would take his own life if only his son might be spared from a deadly sickness. Humayun recovered and shortly after Baber died.

Humayun had indeed a good start in life. He was the child of love. Physiologists tell us that the children of parents who are lovers are full of vitality, and so Humayun is one of the most living of India's Emperors, for his mother was Maham Begum, the favourite wife of Baber. His three sisters were named by their fond parents "Rose-blush," "Rosy-face," and "Rose-form."

Humayun's tomb, built by his widow Haji Begum at a cost of fifteen lacs, paid by their immortal son Akbar, is indeed a tomb of Kings, the Westminster Abbey of India, for so many of the House of Timur, the greatest dynasty the world has seen, lie buried there. There are Dara Shikoh, the accomplished and chivalrous son of Shah Jehan, Mah Azam Shah, son of Aurangzeb, four other succeeding Emperors of short reigns, and other princes and princesses. Here surrendered Bahadur Shah, and within sight his sons were shot, so perishing the last hopes of that glorious house.

IV

DREAM LIFE IN REAL LIFE

Delhi is a city of contrasts, more sharply defined perhaps than in any other upon earth.

All around the plains are scattered with the memorials of mourning, the decay of dead dynasties, the extinction of empires. For it is as though Delhi were the loadstone city of Asia, drawing to herself and to their doom with a terrible spell the heroic spirits of every nation under Heaven. Almost it might be written across her portals: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." The atmosphere is heavy with the sound of the clashing of conquerors, the crashing of kingdoms, the annihilation of armies. For the song of Delhi is the song of the Passer By.

But when once we enter the enchanted portals of the Lahore Gate into the Fort, all is changed as by a wizard's spell. The world is once more a place of beauty and life is sweet to live in such surroundings. From the first step through the narrow door in the majestic

 façade

façade and into the red arcade inside, it is as though the great gates shut out the ugliness of life behind them, for one catches a glimpse from afar of the perhaps loveliest pedestal on earth which once proudly bore the Peacock Throne. If the Moghuls came with devastation and terror, if Tamerlane, the terrible Turk, the Scourge of God, ravaged all Asia, taking Delhi *en route*, and only spared the Celestial Empire because Death claimed him on its borders; if the sweet plains and flowery jungles of the Jumna were disturbed by Baber's drunken camp, still they have left behind them a dream of beauty to comfort our hearts for evermore. And it is as though Shah Jehan's reign were the epitome of the loveliness of life in its material aspect, as though he were permitted to show us how exquisite a thing this earth-dream can be. His grandfather, Akbar the Great, had been the greatest man of power the world had known; had in working hours moved men as pawns about a continent, as in play-time he played pacheesee with women for counters in his palace of Fattehpore Sikri; but Shah Jehan was content with living the perfect life of Beauty. Here is the account of a banquet given to him by his father-in-law,

Asaf

Asaf Khan, the father of the Lady of the Taj. We are first told that the feast was given in the principal hall of the bath, which was the private apartment of a great Indian Turk, and this presumably accounts for the fact that the ladies of the Court emerged from their seclusion for the occasion: "Here there were added rich carpets of silk, silver, and gold, and Persian coverings of gold and silver for the stands and dressers, all covered with vessels of gold and jewellery, and enamelling, with which the light had full occupation. This superb display was accompanied by various large perfume vessels, and silver braziers of extraordinary forms placed round the halls, in which burnt very sweet perfumes composed of amber, civet, and other blended pastilles. At the entrance of this beautiful hall the water works on one side delivered seven streams whose silver pipes of admirable make and considerable size were adorned with thin plates of enamel, which through their elevated heads discharged fine threads of scented waters, which falling in a large basin of the same material, kept it always half full." The table-cloth was of very fine white tissue in which were woven artificial flowers of gold and silver. In the chief

chief place of this table were two great cushions of cloth of gold and satin, on which were other smaller ones, also satin.

"The Emperor arrived, accompanied by a great train of beautiful and gallant ladies who came in front, very richly dressed in cloth of gold and coloured silk wearing ropes of pearls. On each side of the Emperor were his mother-in-law and his daughter, and followed by the Crown Prince, Dara, and his grandfather, Asaf Khan. Beautiful instruments were played in the adjoining rooms, and two matrons with splendid fans kept off the flies when the Emperor was seated. Then the hosts and their children fell on their knees before his Majesty, who bade them rise, and seated his mother-in-law at his right hand, calling her mother. Most sweet voices were heard singing of the victories of the Emperor over his enemies. Four lovely girls related to Asaf Khan entered, daughters of great lords and fair as northern beauties. These brought gold vessels and satin cloths for the washing of hands. The banquet was served on dishes of gold and presented by two beautiful girls on their knees at the Emperor's side. After a feast of four hours' duration, twelve dancing women entered, and

and eventually three beautiful young ladies came with large and splendid dishes of gold, filled with precious diamonds, pearls, rubies and other valuable gems." Surely Shah Jehan, the Moghul, was at one with Oscar Wilde, the modern, in his philosophy of curing the soul by the senses, as the senses through the soul. For the Taj is the life of the spirit in marble, as the Diwan-i-Khas is the desire of the flesh in stone. Almost every inch of it is crying out with the passions and penances of the men and women who have made history there.

What shall we write of the two daughters of Shah Jehan? Who of all the women who have lived and loved in those peerless rooms most vividly stir the imagination of their sisters of the pale race from across the seas. Who of us wandering over the polished floor beside the aqueduct, and behind the marble screen with the pair of balances, into the little lovely rooms beyond, has not fancied to see the ghost of Jehanara glide shade-like away from where it waited for a phantom lover, to hear the chink of Roshanara's bracelets as she counted on her fingers the hosts of her brother Aurungzeb? To Jehanara, World Adorner,

was

was it given in the course of her long life to see the height of glory of the House of Timur, as well as to hear the knell of the first hour of its decline.

Of what different parts were Shah Jehan's two daughters! What different *rôles* did Fate assign to each both in life and death!

To the Princess Royal she gave most at birth, beauty and brains, and that greatest of gifts, a genius for loving, adoring and being adored by her father; staunchly true to her brother Dara, the people's idol, yet receiving her lovers in the little inlaid rooms, but renouncing all and leaving the fairy palace with magnificent resignation to follow her father in the hour of his fall. Jehanara, who had lived in the hey-day of her youth the most perfect life of the senses the world has seen, chose in death to lie near the tomb of a holy man, to be known, firstly, as the disciple of the Chisti saint, secondly, as the daughter of the Great Moghul, with only grass as covering for her royal humility.

Roshanara, Brilliant Ornament, sharp in intrigue, and politic in conduct, was faithful to the rising star of Aurungzeb, and shared his triumphs, passing through the streets of

 Delhi,

Delhi, to the gardens of Kashmir on her stupendous Pegu elephant, the howdah blazing with gold and blue, and followed by sixty other elephants equally resplendent, bearing all the beauties of the Court and their attendants, on her way to a holiday beside the Shalimar and Jhelum, accompanying the Emperor who was followed by an army of 300,000 men. Over their camp at night hung the Lamps of Heaven, 120 feet high, while watch-fires blazed round the camp, and sentries paced their round.

Roshanara loved beauty in her life, and in death she lies covered, not by green grass, but by marbles, surrounded by flowers varied as the days of her gorgeous career, the passion pale flowers of the tuberose, the flaming tints of the hibiscus, the imperial purple of the bougainvillea.

One other woman of the Royal House of Timur has come down to us in history, the last to live in those marble halls before the pale-faced women of the West filled them with their light laughter.

Zainat Mahal, Ornament of Palaces, watched from the eight-sided tower, outlined against the blue haze that hangs above the Jumna, her

 sari

sari blown about her by its breezes into folds Leighton would have loved, waiting for those Meerut men who were to free her house from their hated foe.

Delhi Durbar and the Great State Ball! The halls of Shah Jehan and the fashions of Paris! The flower of the West in the Abode of Glory! Never even in the days of the Great Moghul could the red granite walls of the Diwan-i-Am have witnessed a more dazzling spectacle, for Europe had sent of her best as a tribute to Asia's Queen City. Reigning Sovereigns of Western Kingdoms sulked at being ranked below dusky potentates of the jungles. Two of the four favourite Duchesses of England's Queen here found themselves of small account. Barbarian Princes, with the veneer of Pall Mall, waltzed proudly with such women as consented to be conspicuous in the hope of a bracelet as a New Year's *douceur*. A famous beauty swept by with violet draperies and floating perfumes trailing behind her. It was her last official appearance on any stage, her name having since been removed from the lists of those whom the Lord Chamberlain delights to honour.

This

This great meeting or all nations under Heaven was a time of searching of hearts, and many were the Fates then crossed. But outwardly it was a scene of motley splendour such as our generation shall never again see. There in the red sandstone halls of the Great Moghul, and in the white brilliance of the loveliest room in all the world, where the electric lights seemed to penetrate inches deep into the pearl shell walls of the Diwan-i-Khas, and make the gilding dazzling, Lady Curzon floated in her peacock robe over the mosaic pavement where once royal feet had passed, while the band played memories of the might-have-beens.

It was the most dazzling spectacle of our generation. Those who had witnessed the Imperial balls in the Winter Palace, Europe's proudest assemblies, said they paled before the splendour of this. Yet how many weary hearts that brave show concealed! To how many that great reunion brought pain and disappointment of long-cherished dreams! To how many in that fairy phantom city of the Durbar Camp came home with terrible force and icy blast of withered hopes, perhaps the

saddest quatrain in all Laurence Hope's lines:

> Only the walls of one thin tent of canvas,
> Only a yard of yellow desert sand
> Between us two, and yet I know you distant
> As though you lived in some far desert land.

The concentrated essence of human passion seems in the air of Delhi. On the Ridge almost every clod of earth has been drenched with human blood. In Metcalfe House, before the Mutiny, women danced and sang, and dreamed of their love affairs; women of like passions to ourselves, albeit they wore early Victorian flounces, and spoke more elegantly than our slang jargon.

Delhi Ridge, from which one sees the world's loveliest pile encircled by the rose-red turret walls. Where the white egg of the Jama rises, flanked by its guardian minarets, where the green trees jealously guard the peerless pearl of the Diwan-i-Am.

Delhi Ridge, where the Jumna winds beneath, sometimes doubling on itself like a broad riband, like the Jhelum's patterns on Kashmir shawls, sometimes in flood like a sea, but always a river of passionate remembrances; now bearing on its breezes the sighs

 of

of the world's most fervid lovers, now dyed with the blood of its most renowned heroes.

Delhi Ridge, where the electric blue of the spread peacock's tail flashes among the sage greens of the cactus as the bird saunters stately home to later join in the peacocks' chorus, which after dusk rises clear and strong from the deserted halls of Metcalfe House.

Delhi Ridge, where the jackal boldly runs through the deserted mosque, to pause and survey the sunset from the doorway.

Delhi Ridge, where the cry of the *muezzin* rings loud and clear from the Mussalman section of the regimental camp there, faintly echoed across the waters from many a gem mosque in the city now hushed in twilight.

Delhi Ridge, where India's Bayard lived the last days of his charmed life, and died at thirty-five with hope and ambition still hot within him ; never, fortunate man, to know that dreariest pain of "a heart grown cold in vain." And from beneath the Ridge his image still guards the city he saved, bidding us warm and renew our chilled hopes

at

at the fire of Nicholson's strength and Nicholson's youth.

Where all the armies of Asia in bewildering succession cross and recross the stage, and where that one solitary sepoy, true to his salt, formed up behind that crushed despondent company of British refugees, and at his own word of command marched off to meet a glorious death.

Delhi Ridge, from which one views on the plain spread out beneath us the scene of Asia's most stirring dramas, where all the royalties of India assembled for the Aswamedha Săcrifice, to the fairy halls of the Great Moghul, where Aladdin's dream of jewels crystallised into real life.

Delhi Ridge, where the Ktab rises as a fairy finger, pointing ever to the halls where Prithiraj and Sunjogta loved, till near at our feet rises the low mound of the Durbar Amphitheatre, all that is now left of what was once a vast canvas city, vanished as a dream.

To how many men and women in India to-day does the memory of the great meeting of the Durbar touch to the quick either with joy or pain? There are always

always some pages in every life which stand out in vivid colouring from the dull letter-press of every day, and to many the memory of the Durbar days will never fade away.

V

THE SONG OF THE PASSER BY

Is there any religious edifice in the world so beautiful as the Jama Musjid of Delhi? Is there another sacred pile in the world where so many of its greatest men have prayed?

I have seen the Jama Musjid at all hours and at all seasons. In the morning when the glorious sandstone steps, red, as befitting a staircase for royal feet, glows hourly richer and more rare. When the shadows on the white marbles fall sharp and clear, and the stones dazzle like diamonds against a velvet background of dark clouds.

And I have seen it in the evening, when driving home from long, sunny afternoons spent wandering in Delhi's city of Dead Kings, that forty square miles of mausoleums unparalleled elsewhere, in the company of royal ghosts far more entertaining than the *soi-disant* living men and women at the Club. Of the Moghul Princess who, forcibly married to a son of Nadir Shah, the human fiend, only survived the horror for one short year, and

lies

lies beneath delicate marbles, with a tiny slab beside her covering her baby. Of the fierce Adham Khan, the Eastern Tarquin, who took the lovely lady from the dethroned King of Mandu, last of the royal line of Gujerat, when she, the Lucrece of India, killed herself. Akbar considered his sins so great that he felled him to earth with his own hand, and ordered his body should be thrown twice from the palace tower below, lest any spark of that cruel life should live in the flesh. Of the two royal princesses who were poisoned by Adham's mother at the Court before they had time to pour their wrongs into Akbar's ears; of the mother herself, who, faithful to the one love of her life, died of grief only forty days after her son's execution. All these, and many more, make up a company which might well beguile one to the sunset hour. Then the gorgeous colouring of the Jama disappears into one imperial purple, its minarets stand out solemn, yet soft, against the red funeral pyre of the dying day, and it looks like a mosque moulded in violets.

And the pearly dome is most perfect seen above the quaint narrow winding of the Dariba byway, in whose dim recesses artists mould

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with their brown slender fingers ivory elephants with such exquisitely-wrought trappings and tiny chains of ivory that only one piece takes years of patient labour to produce.

What momentous thoughts which have moulded this earth's history have been evolved by Royal thinkers in the Jama Musjid! It was raised by Shah Jehan in gratitude to God for having given into his keeping the greatest empire the world had known. Here the greatest man of pleasure history has seen, for a brief hour or two weekly turned his thoughts away from the things of earth.

Here his son prayed, oh how earnestly, for strength to be true to his ideals, though he paid for them such a price as no man ever paid for conscience' sake before. Here Aurungzeb vowed an empire well lost for right. While within a stone's throw of the Jama the martyr Sikh, Tek Bahadur, saw in a vision those pale faces coming across the seas, who should hear his blood crying from the ground, should proclaim through the length and breadth of Hindustan that religious liberty which Aurungzeb lost an empire to deny.

Even before the pale-faces came Tek Bahadur was avenged in the person of his son, the

 great

great leader Guru Govinda, who made the Sikhs a nation, and led them against Aurungzeb in the hour of his fall. It is said that that great leader is again living among us in the flesh, that Guru Govinda has foregone Nirvana to again appear as a leader of men. But that in this incarnation his mission will be not to the Sikh nation only, but to all mankind; that he will live in history as a saviour of both East and West. *Qui vivra verra.*

Nadir Shah, the Persian, paused a brief moment at the Jama Musjid to mutter a defiant prayer as he hurried away north with the Peacock Throne. And Bahadur Shah, last of the Moghuls, with the tottering steps of his eighty years, passing beneath the red fan-shell frontage of the Mehrab, shadowing dimly into recesses of pure marble where the Holiest dwells, restored for a brief four months' reign to the heritage of his ancestors, strove to forget the gathering of the grim foe without the rosy turret walls.

What wonder, with such memories as these, that the great doors of the Jama, the prayer-house of kings, only swing open to royal feet.

Yet

Yet the most sacred space in all that gorgeous pile is a railed-in space where the Prophet appeared in a vision to a devotee in rags.

Last time I saw the Jama Musjid its doors were flung open wide once more for kingly feet, and the bodyguard of the Amir of Cabul lined the way and squatted in the vaulted entrance; strange men with Calmack faces, and clothed in slate grey with orange facings, and grey astrakhan caps, while others were persuaded of the charm of claret facings and mink caps.

We had hoped to have caught a glimpse of the passing of the Amir to prayer, and had clung like limpets to a dusty ladder in the entrance; but before the weird music of his band had ceased all trace of white blood was disdainfully swept down the red granite flight into the street below. Yet a fakir in a dirty ascetic's dress wandered through casually just as the Amir was expected, sauntering along the red spirally laid carpet lined with soldiers, where English royalties could not have passed.

The Amir was coming from the sacrifice of the Id, that sacrifice of a goat or a camel in commemoration of the sacrifice of Ishmael, for

for which two hundred thousand Moslems had gathered in Delhi from all the country round about. For, according to the law of the Prophet, Abraham, who lived in Mecca, wished to kill Ishmael, not Isaac. Said the youth to his father, "Why don't you bandage your own eyes instead of mine?" Abraham did so, and when the binding was removed from his eyes, lo! the boy had been miraculously changed into a goat. It was in memory of this miracle that royalties and beggars were alike gathered together in a tremendously good fellowship for each other and jealous exclusion of heretics, such as only the faith of Islam knows.

No lovelier mosaic of colouring exists on earth than the Jama Musjid on a Friday. The dim recesses of the Mehrab, where the marbles take every shade of white, forms a perfect background. There a worshipper in a pale lemon silk coat leads in a child in glorious rose pink. A man in a scarlet robe kneels beside one in pale lilac. Round the olive-green waters of the tank, where the ripples of the February wind reflect the burnished copper cupolas, men in robes of tangerine, orange, China blue, sage green, and

 claret,

claret, bend to wash the sins of the week away. Across the mosque, two in burnt amber and yellow ochre dresses walk together towards the Mehrab; against its grey shadows the various tones of yellow show up best. Another enters the great square in lettuce-green with shawl of mulberry, while an old man with a long beard and a decrepit step wears a violet coat whose deep hue strikes a richer note in colour than all the rest. He is accompanied by one in slate colour and yellow turban, while close by a long-coated figure in scarlet has a cap of gold. A boy in richest peacock satin brocaded with pink bouquets bends over the water, and two, who may be twin brothers of equal height, are robed alike in brightest rose. A man in a moss-green velvet jacket removes a shawl of mandarin yellow on the Mehrab steps, and two others pass up behind him, one in a zebra-striped jacket of black and tawny orange, and his companion in a grass-green drapery over snowy white, and a yellow puggree on his head.

While ever around the dome the silver linings of the pigeons' wings circle in the sunlight.

And holy women have watched the soaring

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of the dome; have winged their prayers heavenwards beneath its shadow. It was in this quarter that Princess Farkunda lived, that royal saint who wielded so strange an influence over the rascal Prince Abu Bakr. In the days of his madness, whom the gods meant to destroy, he hunted hidden Christians in the byways of Delhi; in the intervals he rested in the rooms of a woman who had left the Moghul Court to live the life of a student saint. Had he listened to her soft words of counsel he might never have heard the whiz of Hodson's bullet.

And to-day also, beneath the white dome of the Jama in an old Jain mansion, in a street so narrow that two can scarce walk abreast, lives a modern woman who has turned her back on all other women hold most dear, for the sake of a great ideal. A slum behind the Jama, an alley from whose entrance a cow must be dislodged ere one can pass, with a foul stench rising better imagined than written of; for these she gladly exchanged a free colonial life, between the river and the sea, an honoured position, yes, and dearer, to spend her days in solitary, unrequited labour among an alien race. Surely she shall reap her reward.

 There

There are other streets in the world of which more has been written than of the Chandni Chowk of Delhi. Men have talked more of the Rue de la Paix, of Piccadilly and Pall Mall. Yet none can touch the Chandni Chowk in pure beauty, with its double row of peepuls above the central aqueduct, its lovely robed passengers from every nation under heaven.

Nor can any European street boast of a prayer-house whose roof is of pure gold. Yet such are the three big domes and four small ones of the little mosque, unpretentious in other ways, and situated on an upper storey above some shops, and fringed with neam-trees, where Nadir Shah watched with gloating eyes his soldiers sack the richest street in Asia.

What strange processions, what motley throngs have passed through the Chandni Chowk, from the day when Dara Shikoh, bound and tattered, passed through a people's tears to his death, to the time when Mary Curzon in pale blue crêpes and gold embroideries, with wistaria blossoms on her head, answered their acclamations with her smiles!

Not far from the Chandni Chowk is the

most

most wonderful shop in the world, a place from which the heir to the richest empire turned away with envious regrets. It is kept by a Hungarian on whose shoulders has descended the mantle of that mysterious Simla merchant who combined an astute eye to business in the things of this world with an extensive dealing on the other side of the veil. A colonel of artillery with materialistic tastes told me he had never heard music so beautiful as when Mr. Jacob's familiar spirit sang "Nearer, my God, to Thee," out of space, accompanied by organ sounds also of the other world. When the crash came, occasioned by the perfidy of a great Indian Prince, the wonderful collection, the Asiatic Wallace Gallery, was moved to Delhi for the winter months. One of its greatest treasures is a unique shrine of Sakya Tubpa, taken from a Buddhist Nunnery at Dongtze, near Lhassa the Blessed, where holy nuns of the yellow sect, of the Right-Hand Path, seek for knowledge by killing out the lower self. Over the head of the Buddha is the tree of knowledge, guarded by dragons, the symbol of wisdom. All round this tree are many smaller images of the monster in lapis lazuli, turquoise, agate, cornelian,

 mother-

mother-of-pearl, and ivory, while above the Holy One's head soars the Swan, of which it is written in an ancient Thibetan scripture, "Bestride the Bird of life if thou wouldst know."

Then there are gorgeous Elephants in priceless *cloisonnés*, gold, blues or reds, and yellows and greens. These were made in the time of the Emperor Kien Lung, and being the sacred animals of Law were taken from the high altar of the Temple of Heaven.

And pearly jade ornaments, also from China, each in one piece of one and a half inches, whose delicate chains took not only the life time of an artist, but the dreams of a poet to manipulate.

A miniature mountain of brightest blue turquoise comes from the dim, incensed daghoba of a yellow-cap monastery in Eastern Thibet whose Naljars are holy men. In its rocky clefts five miniature Gold Buddhas are seated each worshipping in a different pose, while in grim and ugly contrast is an apron made of carved human bones used by the red-cap sect; the followers of the Left-Hand Path, the Bhons and Dugpas of Western Thibet who practise the ghastly tantric rites of black magic.

A box of old Lucknow enamel on silver purchased from a cadet of the hapless royal house of the City of Gardens has the double fish only used by royalty. This is enamelled in the design of the Tree of Life with cranes, peacocks, orioles, and Vultures, all in natural colours on the pale metal.

A carved sapphire represents a life-sized double peach in soft shades of grey blues, the emblem of longevity, and a sceptre in one solid piece of pale reseda jade from the Summer Palace of Pekin, with the yellow ticket of the royal inventory on it, is the token of good luck given by the Emperor on New Year's Day. A tear bottle in carved porcelain of a curious green, also from China, has the eight glorious emblems of Buddhism on it, with borders of the Key design, later borrowed by the Greeks.

But one of the gems of the collection, perhaps its rarest, is an oval cup of rock crystal whose like is only in the Vatican in an Italian design of the sixteenth century, probably brought by Bernier or Tavernier as a present to the Great Moghul. Its simple design of poppies, the handles formed of a single bud, its clear crenellated bowl of exquisite purity, forms a contrast, perhaps of intention by the

giver,

giver, to their cups of gold and gems, but an English royal lady could hardly be persuaded to lay it down. This was bought from the family of a Delhi nobleman.

Still another Buddha comes from Katmandu, the hill capital of Nepal, whose Prime Minister recently resigned the powers of office to don the yellow robe of prayer. The head and body are in pure turquoise, its draperies in gold bordered with rubies, while the lotus flower beneath the Master has its petals of turquoise and coral.

Then there is a Ganesh, the God of luck and wisdom, whose aid is implored for all undertakings, carved out of one emerald, and others in aquamarine and turquoise.

But the mightiest God is represented as Shiva's bull in one pearl half the size of the largest pearl in the world. This pearl was born in the shape of a bull with two heads, into which a ruby tongue and emerald eyes have been inserted. The Bull ridden by Shiva is the symbol of the world, its four feet stand for Agni or fire, Vaya the wind, the light-giving Sun, and the over-arching Sky. It was bought from a Hindu Rajah, and its companion piece is a lingam, the most ancient religious symbol in the world, older than history, perhaps older than

man

man himself, for the lingam, stands for the most sacred mysteries in the occult schools. This lingam is again formed of one pearl born in that shape, set on an amethyst *yoni*, and standing on an altar fringed with rubies and plated with the nine gems of Hindustan.

As befitting the idol of a king the lingam is surmounted by a gold umbrella, part of the insignia of royalty, fringed with emeralds, and at the four corners of the altar are four roses with petals of carved Burmese rubies.

And there are strange conches used in Thibetan worship, and such as the warriors blew on the field of Kurukshetra, mounted on *repoussé* copper work and with gilded dragons, and again the eight glorious emblems of Buddhism of which the conch is one, set with turquoise and carved cornelian.

From the head-dress of a high Lama of Lhassa comes a piece of pure raw gold set with an enormous cabochon star sapphire, surrounded by flowers of turquoise and rough sapphires, rubies, and pearls. In the red of the gold, and close to this an ivory cobra closely coils round a skull, also in Chinese ivory, whose slimy scales seem to glisten and glide with healthy motion. There is a

 beautiful

beautiful representation of the relentless Wheel of Life to whose gyrations we all are bound so long as imperfection remains in us. It is formed by concentric rings of turquoise on a dull gold frame, and again surmounted by the sacred bird. This also came from the head of a Thibetan idol, and it has the sacred triangle represented in an enormous cabochon ruby at the top. While of the things of this world is the frivolous head-dress of a fair Manchurian Princess, with a ground formed not of blue enamel, but of real kingfisher's feathers fastened down on gold to represent such, while mice in jade, coral, and amber, disport themselves among flowers of seed pearls, and propitiate the God of the Princess's good luck. The amber of which the mice were made had come from that strange district on the borders of China, Thibet, and Burmah, which is peopled by the tribe of the Abor Nagars, who living naked, but not ashamed, have been described by those who have seen them as the most absolutely happy and innocent community on earth. They wear no clothes, but they are adorned by a most strict chastity. At fourteen a boy is taken to the Bachelor's Hall, and not allowed to select a wife until he has shown his

three heads of prowess. All the men and women work together in the fields, and if provided with blankets will wear them round their necks. A Durbar was recently held where the Bramahputra issues from the Himalayas in the lands of this tribe. A grand old chief walked in *au naturel* with a bowler hat on his head as a concession to civilisation. He stalked down the hall, threw down his tribute of amber, the only money they have, before the Deputy Commissioner, looked at the Sahibs with most absolute contempt, and walked out. An eye-witness described this scene to me as unique of its kind!

The light of the Indian night is a light which never was on sea or land, outside India.

The lime-light of the stage is the nearest idea one can give of it, a light by which one can see to read, yet in all that seems crude and garish by day is transformed. The stucco of the Chandni Chowk becomes marble, the mosques become mother-of-pearl memories. The moon, and she is always with us, is a round silver ball, not a wan wisp. When the sun goes down on our days of travail, Venus beams above our nights of love.

When Anglo-Indian chatter is for a few

hours

hours, lulled to quiet, then a concert of a myriad sweeter voices takes its place, the soothing whirr of the cricket clan, the hoarse hoot of the owls, the heavy flutter of the peacocks flight home, the swift sly pursuit of the Jackal. It was probably in Delhi that Baber noticed that "whenever there are many Peacocks in a wood there are also a number of Jackals in it. The Peacock has a neck of fine azure painted with richest yellow, green, azure, violet. It has flowers or stars on its back. Its tail is as high as a man, and it is much molested by Jackals in dragging this after it in its passage from one thicket to another."

Then the scents. Ah the scents! If you are susceptible to the strange subtle power they wield over some natures, avoid the Indian night as Tolstoi counsels the sound-swayed to avoid music. In no other land are perfumes so let loose upon men. The vieux rose bouquets of the oleander give out a scent so powerful that the mind which receives it gives one mad bound to a vision of happiness too keen for this cut-and-dry world. The smell of the earth gasping a few hours before the rain falls is as a tortured heart clamouring for the with-held wine of love. Its joy when

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the monsoon breaks is that of a woman no longer alone. I was standing one such evening at the door of an Anglo Indian Club, looking out on its lovely garden. The scents, the sounds, and the lights of the night were as a vision of paradise. A *bara mem* pushed past from behind me. She was the wife of a man whom India had raised from a humble position in life to rule over hundreds of thousands, a woman whom Viceroyalties delighted to honour. She had spent all her life surrounded by the poetry, the glamour, the glory of the East. But as she bustled down the steps into the glowing radiance of that matchless night she exclaimed approvingly: "Jolly moonlight!"

Beneath the Stones of Delhi lie buried many lost illusions. It is indeed the city of dead hopes. Timur, first of the Moghul Emperors, saw in a dream an oasis in a desert in which was a palace. There a man wrote the Book of Fate for all the human race. But when Timur asked to know his own destiny he awoke. Happy Timur! For some of us there will be no awakening from that lurid nightmare called life, till death comes.

Requiescat in pace.

THE LIGHTS OF HOME

Men should be judged, not by their tint of skin,
The Gods they serve, the vintage that they drink,
Nor by the way they fight, or love or sin,
But by the quality of thought they think.

Stars of the Desert

THE LIGHTS OF HOME

It is an extraordinary fact that many persons of intelligence will spend all their lives in India without seeking to know anything of the tenets of that great faith, the mother religion of our race, of whom all other religions are offspring.

Yet some of the world's greatest intellects, including Asia's wisest men of action, as well as Europe's profoundest thinkers, have abased themselves before the Hindu religion, which is as a loving mother welcoming back way-worn children from the pathless jungles of agnosticism to her sheltering bosom.

Akbar, when he could not sleep at night, passed the hours in converse with a brahman brought to his bedside, and so Hegel became a convert, and Schopenhauer, he who more than any other sounded the depths of sorrow, said that the Vedanta had been the mainstay of his life, would be his solace in death. It appeals alike to the primitive instincts of the savage, to the wild Gond, as well as to the

 German

German philosopher. Neither the fierce persecution of the Mahomedan conqueror nor the mild persuasions of the Christian missionary have availed one iota against the resistless force of the oldest religion of the Aryan race.

What is the secret of its vitality?

The Hindu religion is the most tolerant of all religions, the only one which has never persecuted the followers of any other. "Even those who worship other gods worship me," says its God in his incarnation of Shri Krishna. And so the Hindu is allowed to believe what he likes, because all conceptions of the Infinite are ennobling so long as he does nothing which will injure his fellow man. He may be an atheist if he will, but he may not break his caste, an institution founded for the benefit of all.

And because the enemies of the Hindu religion, those to whom it is a matter of bread and butter to revile it, have aimed their most poisoned arrows at the Avatar * of Krishna, let me hasten to state that one is never asked in Hinduism to accept or to act upon anything which does not appeal to one's highest sense of right. Ignorance only is a stumbling block.

Incarnation.

For

For at the time of the episode of the gopis,* made the subject of so many low attacks, we are taught that the Lord, in His human body, was only eight or nine years old, and that the gopis had been in their past lives great sages who now re-incarnated at the same time as the infant Lord, in the same place where Shri Krishna was born. As in the Divine Comedy of Dante,† the Saviour when he ascended from Hades carried with him the souls of Patriarchs, so the Lord in his incarnation of Krishna gave these sages an opportunity of showing their devotion to Him.

Dante was beyond all doubt an Initiate of the Eastern Wisdom, for he shows an accurate knowledge of the life intermediate after "death." How all have received there the exact meed they have earned, how those who sinned ‡ through passion are tossed about ceaselessly in the dark air by the most furious winds. How those whom anger § overcame and who were "sad in the sweet air" were confined in the murky Stygian Lake.

* Milkmaids.

† "Inferno," Canto XII.

‡ *Ibid.* Canto V.

§ *Ibid.* Canto VII.

And

And again he describes how the souls in Hades* knew there what would happen in the future, not current events, in the earth life, because, as all clairvoyants are aware, events happen on the spiritual plane months and years before they transpire in physical life.

In the Hindu religion we are given complete directions for every walk in life, from the cradle to the grave, and full details as to what we shall meet on the other side of death, details which those sufficiently advanced may verify for themselves during the earth-life. The pale horse and his rider has no terror for the Hindu, who knows he will confront him at the appointed hour, not before, and that he will bear him not to a golden paradise, nor to a burning hell, but to just that state of being to which his own deeds and thoughts during the past life have drawn him.

For instance, those who have "died" in horror and fear, in scenes of battle, murder, and sudden death, haunt those places long afterwards, as the ghosts of the mutiny victims in the chambers above the Lahore Gate at

* "Inferno," Canto X.

 Delhi

Delhi Fort. Those who have spent quiet, reflective lives in study, mainly for their own interest and advantage, pass centuries after "death" poring over the books in spirit libraries before they are allowed to pass on the Realms of the Blest.

One of the first lessons we are taught in Hinduism is that what is right for one person is wrong for another. A brahman, whose duty is to teach religion, is not allowed to touch wine, but a Rājput, whose duty is to defend his country, is commanded to drink it. A sudra woman, so long as she fulfils her duty of serving, may marry a second time if she will, but a brahman woman, having once given her word, must keep it till death, because marriage to the Hindu is founded on an attraction of spirit continued through many lives.

The morning ablutions are as much a spiritual duty as the prayer, and no Hindu is allowed to eat until he has both bathed and prayed. It has been well said that from the hour of conception religion begins for the Hindu. Western science has demonstrated the power of sound, how sound can make and sound can destroy. With sacred sounds

the

the spirit which is coming towards the earth life is helped in the building of its home. Again at birth harmonies of sound surround it, and at the ceremony of initiation the child is given the mantram which is to be the key-note of its life. Then at the hour of death the "Shraddas" help the departing spirit on its way.

The second great lesson we learn is that of Law, the automatic working of cause and effect, and an education in natural science is an excellent preparation for this. Besides the great doctrines of Re-incarnation and Karma the Hindu learns of the existence of Law in every other department of life. He learns not only that nothing happens by accident or chance, but also that nothing is given for nothing, without being duly earned. Of the existence of the devas or nature spirits in every department of nature, and how he must pay a tribute to these of sacrifice and worship if he wishes to reap the fruits of the earth, so that the humblest villager is taught to lay a leaf at the village shrine.

For instance, a brahman friend of mine, a woman of advanced knowledge, was once engaged for weeks in performing certain ceremonies involving sacrifices of offerings, feeding

 the

the poor, &c., in order that she might obtain the release from their sufferings on the astral plane of a certain family whose sins in the earth-life had bound them there.

A large part of the work of those who are able by their increase of knowledge to pass into the astral state and function there at will, consists in helping and comforting the dead. There is, of course, far more occultism in the Roman Catholic communion than in the Protestant secession. We read that St. Theresa was levitated from the ground so frequently by occult agency in the presence of the entire congregation during the Mass that special envoys had to be sent to Rome for instructions how to deal with these phenomena. The writings of the great Carmelite are full of her first-hand experiences on the spiritual plane while her body remained in trance.

It is a matter of history that in the thirteenth century a wave of mysticism passed over that wonderful convent of Unterlinden, near Colmar, so that not only one or two nuns, but the whole convent was filled with the Christ, so that His devotees were levitated above the ground, hearing celestial music, and

their bodies worn with ascetic penances gave forth sweet scents. Others became transparent or were haloed with unearthly lights. All these phenomena of the spiritual life, familiar to pupils of Eastern occultism, were visible in that western cloister.

And again Catherine of Siena was so permeated with the image of the crucified Lord that the stigmata of His wounds actually appeared in the flesh of her own body, a phenomenon similar to those which modern physicians know of through "suggestion."

A modern scientist has advanced a theory that if only the process were understood it would be possible to take the tracings from the etheric vibrations of all events which have happened anywhere, to reduce them on the surface of a room, so that walls should speak. Occultists make a practice of doing this; the knowledge of all the past is stored in the akashic * records and tapped by adepts at will.

Now we are taught by these records that the allegory of the Virgin Mary has its origin in the birth of the "Son," the creative force in nature from the union of the

* Etheric.

"Father," the Spirit, with the virgin promordial matter of universe. From this was born the Logos.

We are taught that the story of the crucifixion is derived from the descent of the Sun God into the winter solstice at Christmas, whence he rises again at Easter. So that the myths of the Virgin Goddess and of the crucifixion of her son are a part of every religion, of the ancient Egyptians as well as of modern Catholics.

But whatever our mental conception of the Virgin, she will always remain the symbol of stainless, immaculate purity, purer than purity itself.

But almost more persistently than any other lesson we are taught the enormous power of *thought*.

It would be better to put dynamite into the hands of a child, we are told, than the powers of thought into the hands of an unscrupulous person. But, fortunately, the last thing that occurs to the persons of the pushing, scheming, intriguing world around us is to take the surest way of getting what they want—*e.g.*, to sit down and quietly think about it. "Busy as I am in my public and private work, I spend

 more

more time in thought. If you want anything done, try thinking about it." These are some of the public utterances of her whom the whole Hindu nation looks upon as a mother.

The problem of Free Will is as old as the hills. Hinduism solves it briefly. We can mould to-morrow by our thoughts not to-day, for to-day reaps yesterday's sowing. That is why the great events of life always happen unexpectedly. A man is met "by chance." He beguiles an idle hour. He sways the thoughts of years. A woman glides from behind a curtain. She sits in smiling silence. She slips a leash for life.

Perhaps never since Plato hammered his doctrine of the world of ideas into the volatile crowd among the marbles of Athens has this teaching permeated the western world to the extent it has to-day.

One who absorbed more of Hellenic thought both for good and evil ends, than any other Englishman of our time, has written that he entered the Thought World through a prison door. How the people outside the cell are deceived by the illusion of a life in constant motion. They revolve with life and contribute

 to

to its unreality. Those who are immobile both see and know. This is the exact standpoint of the occultist. He is confronted by forces which make the outer world vague and shadowy. Such considerations as dress, social position, even ordinary comforts, shrivel up. He tosses them impatiently away. A fairy world is opening to his jaded vision, from which no one outside can bar him. To enter it he need never leave his chair. With unspeakable joy he recognises that he is freed from the fetters of men. Old age has no terrors, for *he* is ever young. His ears become dulled, he hears the Divine Music the plainer. His vision fails, he has the Third Eye. "I may seem a very idle person, lying all day upon this bed, but in reality I am a very busy person," said one whose work in the occult world is to examine from her couch the thoughts of others sometimes at the other side of the world. To such an one to discard the body is no more than for the ordinary man to throw off his clothes. There are no limits for him who knows how to think. Gravitation cannot bind him. He can leave this planet at will. His wishes are wings which bear him whither he chooses. He visits Holier Worlds. . . . For God's sake think !

 Not

Not to-day is the Hindu religion in outward seeming what it once was. Seldom do the Gods appear in the open temples, never do celestial voices ring from the skies, nor flowers from on high descend upon the earth.

No longer do proud emperors prostrate before the brahman. No Avatar for many centuries has trodden the Sacred Land. Only through travail in anguish could the mighty mother become the Saviour of the World. Only by the scything of Kurukshetra,* through bloody sweat and agony of invasion, could she fulfil the Law of Sacrifice which has made her the Mother of the Earth.

For scarcely to-day can one find a western tale of serious motive untouched by her influence, unimpinged by her thought. When an emissary of the Ancient Wisdom appears in modern London, hundreds are turned hungrily from crowded halls. The Anglo-Saxon race seems at last to have described its descending arc of evolution. It is on the return journey of involution. At last in our generation it rises to its original level. Its face is set towards the Rising Sun. It seeks its primeval home.

* The Kshattrya (warrior) caste was cut to pieces on the Field of Kurukshetra.

HOLY KASHI

I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell;
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

Sudden Light.



Photo by Mazumdar

IN HOLY KASHI

HOLY KASHI

As the haven is to the wrecked mariner and home to the exile, as food is to the starving and love to the lonely, so is the holy city of Benares to the Hindu. It is here the man of business comes to end his days in peaceful calm, and hither alike the Raja and the beggar wends his steps from the uttermost parts of India, to seek spiritual blessings on the shores of the holy mother Ganges. The one stays in his river-palace, resembling in size and build a Piccadilly mansion ; the other establishes himself on his wooden plank under a rush umbrella ; but the end and aim of both is the same. Would you know what the city is like, this magnetic loadstar of India, which draws all men into it ? Then picture a broad and stately river, wide as our Thames at Westminster, but sparkling under sunshine and blue skies, its banks lined for miles by stately palaces, and with the richly-carved spires of the temples spiking the blue in all directions, each surmounted by a golden banneret. Broad

steps

steps lead down from the mansions to the waters, and each great prince has his own particular flight or ghat. Thus there is Scindia's Ghat, and next to it Holkar's Ghat, and so on; and all the ghats are thronged with thousands of pilgrims, who have travelled for months, and in some cases for years, from the plains of the south, and from the mountain villages of the Himalayas, to bathe in the sacred river. No other city in the whole world commands such love, such reverence, such devotion. The ghats are a dream of colour. I have travelled much in the Far West, as well as in the East. I have seen many stately pageants, many scenes in which men and women have donned their bravest and their best, but never have I seen such a galaxy of hues, such a kaleidoscope of colour as the dresses of the pilgrims present. All the colours of the rainbow—and many that the rainbow apparently has not—are there, ever changing, ever shifting, with dazzling effect. And beside some high-born Hindu lady, who has broken her purdah for the pilgrimage, and who comes timidly down the ghat in her sari of pink or sea-green or orange, hard by you will see the ascetic clad in rags, the man whose

 whole

whole life is one long pilgrimage. He may have been born a prince, or the son of a beggar —no one can tell. Unlike his brother Hindus, his caste no man knoweth. If he were once a brahman, the sacred thread was cut when the ties of earth were broken. And now, with ash-smeared hair, and in the ascetic's yellow garment, he is one with the low-born pilgrim from his father's gates. As a Hindu explained it, "Just as in the West," he said, "the possession of material wealth makes all men equal, and if a man only has enough money he can associate with princes, so in the East spiritual things place men on the same level, and the most rigid social system in the world bends before the influence of religion." And, so far, the ascetic caste does not exist. He has no home, no worldly goods, he never sleeps twice in the same place. Wherever he may be, he sweeps a little clean place under some shady tree, and there he rests, free from all earthly cares, his daily need supplied by the food the passers-by put in his little bowl. A rich Hindu banker of Bengal told me he never felt such calm as by an ascetic's temporary lodging. The square yard of swept ground was so clean and neat, and the atmosphere round its tenant so peaceful,

that

that it was a pleasure to be there. Are there not some Englishmen clothed in purple and fine linen, but careful and troubled about many things, who might even envy the ascetic in his rags?

But to return to the river. What is it, then, this magnetic spell which the Holy Mother exerts over her children—so that many spend their lives in the effort to reach her shores, and die happy if resting on her bosom? Is it all delusion? Does the virtue they ascribe to her waters exist only in their imaginations? I am trying to show you Benares and the Ganges as they are to the Hindu, who says that the waters have been blest by Divine Beings, and by holy men, and more I know not—except this one fact, stubborn as its kind: The Government Analyst, in his published report on the Ganges, says that her water is the purest of the pure, and that it has a peculiar power of absorbing and destroying all kinds of impurity and contagion. And a brahman who read this report, himself an honours man in science, said with a smile, "So, then, we have not been so wrong all these years, after all!"

All these years! Through what hoary

centuries

centuries the Ganges has listened to the supplications of her children! To-day they are repeating a prayer at least 5000 years old. It was composed long ago, when our ancestors first left their early home in Central Asia, and the Eastern branch of the Aryan race has preserved it to this day. So that the Hindu first invokes the Sun as the embodiment of force in Nature, and then he prays to that particular incarnation of the Supreme Being whom he has chosen to guide his life, and lastly to the Universal Spirit, apart from whom, according to his philosophy, nothing exists, and of whom all external things are the manifestation. There are many shrines in Benares, and the most thronged of all is the Bisheshwar, or Temple of the Lord of the Universe. It has a central dome covered with beaten gold at the cost of Ranjit Singh. To reach the temple we have to tread our way through the labyrinth of narrow, tortuous streets, where the high houses nearly meet above, and constantly we pass shrines covered with exquisite stone-carving. Arrived there, we are not permitted to enter. Once things were different, and all were welcome to be present at Hindu services. But certain visitors

 showed

showed themselves so inconsiderate of the feelings of others, wantonly desecrating sacred places, that now all except Hindus are excluded. We stood outside, however, and watched the stream of eager crowds enter and leave; and close by was the Well of Knowledge, surrounded by a beautiful colonnade of forty pillars, the gift of the widow of the Maharaja Scindia. Here the brahmans were seated, reading from the Vedas (the book of early Aryan prayers and hymns), while pilgrims, with earnest prayers and tearful eyes, received the holy-water ladled out by the priest.

Our brahman guide conducted us afterwards to another shrine, where women, like Hannah, pray for handsome and stalwart sons; and finally to the temple of the Witness Bearer, where the pilgrim, after completing his round of devotions, receives the crowning verification of it.

A good many of us who are interested in the life of India below the surface being present, some Hindu friends arranged with a certain sect of Shivite Hindus who claim the power of rendering fire harmless, to give an exhibition of their powers. Accordingly, a

trench

trench was dug in the grounds of the Tagore Villa, about fifteen feet long by four, and this was filled with logs of wood which were left to blaze all day. In the evening the trench was filled by a thick layer of glowing coals giving off a tremendous heat. At 7 P.M. we repaired to the scene of action. Our party consisted of Mrs. Besant, Countess Wachtmeister, Dr. Richardson, late Professor of Chemistry at University College, Bristol; Dr. Pascal, a French Doctor of Medicine; Mr. Bertram Keightley, Barrister-at-Law; Miss Lilian Edgar, M.A.; Colonel Olcott, and others. Chairs were arranged for us on a kind of daïs formed of the earth thrown out of the trench, and about eight feet from it. This was the nearest point to the big fire at which one could bear the scorching heat. At our back, and surrounding the trench, was a dense but orderly crowd of hundreds of Hindus. All waited with eager expectation. At last a hubbub approaching from the gates of the Villa announced the arrival of the procession. It consisted of a chief priest who presided, carrying a sword, two others who were going to pass through the flames, and an image in a glass canopy borne along by others.

 The

The leader intimated that his two colleagues would pass through the fiery furnace, and afterwards anybody who liked of the male persuasion might follow them through unharmed, but no women were permitted to go through. Then ensued a most extraordinary, and in some respects painful, spectacle. It is a doctrine of Hinduism that all the functions of Nature—fire, rain, &c.—are presided over by nature spirits. This particular sect of Hindus claims to have preserved the secret of being able to control the fire spirits, so that for the time being they are unable to burn. Whatever may be the explanation, these are the facts. Certain mystic ceremonies having been performed, and cocoa-nuts having been tossed into the flames, the two junior priests apparently became possessed. With frantic shrieks and cries they passed twice round the blazing trench, preceded by the chief priest with his sword, and followed by the brilliantly illuminated canopy. Then, still in a frenzy painful to behold, they plunged up to their ankles in the scorching furnace and passed backwards and forwards several times, the red-hot coals and sparks scattering about their feet. The crowd followed in their wake, first

one

one or two individuals, until the others, gaining confidence and caught by enthusiasm, rushed through in hundreds—even little children of four and five years old running up and down the trench over the burning coals exactly as if it had been a soft carpet. All were unhurt. Amongst those who ventured was a brother of one of our party. This gentleman, whose name I am prepared to give privately, walked through the trench twice very slowly, and described the sensation afterwards as having been like walking over hot sand.

A sceptic amongst us having propounded the theory that the feet of natives were covered by an integument so dense that it was proof even against live coals, Dr. Pascal carefully examined the feet of this witness immediately after his performance, and found the skin of the soles was of the normal thickness of European feet, and that they were untouched by the fire. I saw one man deliberately pause in the middle of the trench to pick up a handful of the flaming embers, which he then carried through to the side. A linen turban which fell from some one's head lay on the coals without igniting, as did

the cocoa-nuts. The priests remained on the scene for about twenty minutes, during which time the two apparently possessed men were held by others. After they left the crowd was advised to cease experimenting with the fire, and no more passed over. At this stage Dr. Richardson and myself left our seats and attempted to approach to the brink of the fiery gulf, but the heat was so great that we had to turn back.

It is said that Benares is mentioned more than once by implication in our New Testament. Tradition says that the Maharaja of Benares was one of the three wise men from the East who saw the Star of the Infant Christ and came to worship Him. Certainly there is still an ancient and wonderful observatory on the roof of one of the palaces, now abandoned and disused, but with the instruments still there of those old-time observers. Again the cloth of shining tissue, which Herod arrayed himself in is supposed to have been one of the kincobs, which have been made at Benares from time immemorial, and which may still be seen, and purchased, if you are rich, at Mr. Debi Parshad's in the Purana Chauk. It was at Benares that Buddha first

preached

preached his mission of reform at a time when the national religion had grown cold and formal. We went to the very spot on which the great King Asoka, the Constantine of Buddhism, reared a "tope," or commemorative column four miles from Benares. Some controversy has taken place about the date of this memorial, but it is certain that the famous pilgrim Hwang Tseng, who came all the way from China to this holy spot in the seventh century, speaks of a column 100 feet high at Sarnath. It is situated in a landscape of quiet sunny beauty, surrounded by banyans and bamboos, and fields of high corn and gorgeous yellow blossoms like broom, and green Eastern poppies, the same which Buddha saw.

Some of them lie before me now, and they bring back the same sadness which came that brilliant morning in India, as the *ticca gharri* jolted home over the rough country road. It was the very same road on which the multitude thronged to Sarnath 2000 years ago to listen to the words of peace which fell from the divine lips of Buddha, and the road and the flowers speak of ideals hard for human frailty to attain.

 The

The religious life in India is more intense than in other lands. Nothing else sways her people. As in England the political note is loudest, and people get hotter at election times than at any other, so in India the affairs of this life are all subordinated to that of the life to come. It is true that again the influence of the great sages has waned and only the shell remains of what was once indeed and in truth, a great spiritual religion. In the old days a raja on his throne, when a brahman, perhaps in rags, entered the room, had instantly to descend and, prostrating before him, obey his commands, for India was then under spiritual rule. And the brahman then, as his name implies, was indeed a spiritual teacher. His life was spent successively in her four stages laid down by Manu—of student, householder, hermit and ascetic. To-day the latter two divisions of the brahman's life have been allowed to lapse. After initiation the brahman spends some years at the feet of his teacher, and Manu says the guru who brings spiritual light to the pupil, is to be held dearer even than his natural father and mother. When the teacher considers the pupil ready he is admitted to the order of householders, and his

 marriage

marriage takes place. Then the sage speaks of the third division of the brahman's life. "When a householder sees his skin wrinkled, and his hair white, and the son of his son, then he may resort to the forest." His wife is to choose whether she will accompany her husband or not, but if not her sons are to care for her. Here in seclusion the brahman is to diligently aim "to attain complete union with the Supreme Soul." The last stage of his life is to be spent in imparting knowledge to others.

In the holy city of India there lingers, more than in any other, some of that old devotion. To-day, as then, the soul that seeks finds beneath forms and ceremonies that undying truth which lies hidden in the depths of all religions, and all who go there are possessed to some extent of the longing to find. This it is which produces an atmosphere there different to that of all other places.

Benares, as I think of you now, far away, when were you most beautiful? Was it in the morning, when the sun shone brightly on your miles of river palaces, and on the golden flags of your thousand temples? Surely never were colours so gay as the lovely dresses of

 your

your pilgrims, surely nowhere is such a vista of splendour as where the pilgrim palaces of the great lords of India jostle each other side by side. Or, was it on that Hindu night of nights, the Dewali festival, when the celebrated brass bazaar was lit up so brilliantly and every brass shop had all its best works of art piled up in front, making a shining, blazing display?

How crowded the bazaar was, with such a busy festive throng, it seemed all a sea of white turbans, and yet not a sign of rowdiness or discord was there. As we passed along the narrow, brilliant street, between the high houses, with the brass and sweets and toys distracting at every step, and the Vishnu Temple showing through the portal its warm, bright interior, it seemed one of the Arabian Nights and a night of a lifetime. Or was it in the evening, as we rode slowly in our river barge up the stream towards the grand porticos of the Delhi Princes' Palace, which stood dark and solemn against the rosy sky, and the halls of the Maharaja of Benares opposite were in a golden mist, and all the other mansions showed soft grey and pinks, and yellows? And a hush lay over the broad river which only the

 sharp

sharp cries of the little green parrots disturbed as they screamed a good-night from neighbouring minarets. And then through the stillness would come the sound of worship, and all along the river bank the bell of each temple would give the signal of the evening time of prayer. Benares, if I could be with you for just five minutes, that is the time I should choose, for only those who have found solace in the Eastern Wisdom know what these temple bells mean.

To my own Gods I go
It may be they shall give me greater ease
Than your cold Christ and tangled Trinities.

A railway journey to Kashi ! * In the country blest by the Lords of Compassion, peopled by "the mild Hindu," the birds and the beasts are tamer and less scared than elsewhere, and the train does not disturb the regiment of cranes, the height of men, quartered along the banks, the grey, fluffy bodies and blood-coloured heads and necks, seemingly suspended in mid-air above the long, reed-like

* Kashi is the Hindu name for Benares.

legs,

legs, while another contingent has smartest black and white plumage and amber bills.

The plains of India are the biggest and loveliest aviary in the world, and the flight of grey herons drifting cloud-like over a lake of lotus, gives place the next moment to the jade rice-field, powdered by a flock of white pelicans, the solitary stork with the squat body and immense yellow beak, the dazzling glint of the blue jay, the splendid isolation of the peacock, the harem of mother monkeys, each with a baby at her breast. While ever the temple spire and banner above the peepuls beyond the ground where the black buck and antelope calmly graze reminds us why the fur and feathers do not fly from man. And the setting sun gilds the field of white pampas plumes into a silver point, and the palms and eucalyptus appear as though etched in jet against the molten sky.

It was late in the evening, and a soft, warm flush suffused the Ganges, when from the railway carriage windows, for the first time in this incarnation, I saw the sacred spires of Kashi.

In India it is always the unexpected that happens. The desert gives birth to the world's

 mammoth



TO MY OWN GODS I GO

mammoth dome, the heart of the jungle contains the fairy lake and palm palaces of marble, the solid block of river masonry gives place to the inconsequent loveliness, the exquisite flutings and tiny colonnades of Jey Singh's observatory, and so in the Path of the Eastern Wisdom, the wildest speculations of life fade into nothingness beside its stupendous realities. Once I heard Dr. Stanton Coit, of the West London Ethical Society, in two clever lectures against Theosophy, call our doctrines "An Aladdin's dream." Brilliant ethical lecturer, your words were truer than you knew. And because we have known each other for many years, and though our auguries have not agreed, yet have always met with smiles, perhaps you will forgive me for re-echoing this clarion note of our silveriest tongued, which I always think of in connection with you.

"Better worship ignorantly in devotion than refuse to worship at all. Better bring a flower or a leaf to some village god than be some great intellectual genius, too proud, too strong, to bend its knee before the spiritual life. For spirit is higher than intellect, as intellect is higher than senses. Then, when the body and the senses fail you, when the mind breaks down

and

and has nothing more to give you, then the spirit finds itself—it is there already always—lying at the lotus feet of its God."

Benares! Is it the subtle chords of a submerged memory struck that the very name suggests Hidden Mystery, Mighty Power, Ultimate Goal, as the syllables of Delhi glint of cloth of gold and of Agra waft love and laces in marble? Taken always in Eastern sibylline books as the symbol for the human heart, has not the Holy City, before ever we set foot in her precincts, breathed always with mysterious accents of the Heart of Life Itself?

How shall I write of you? You, the Mystery of the East incarnate, the Living Sphinx, with your child-woman's body, your magician's wisdom, your lion's strength. To how many holy souls all over the world has it been the dearest dream to meet the Mahatmas face to face! Some have even died scaling snowy precipices in their efforts to gain Their feet. But you need never lift your purdah to behold them, nor stop playing with your dolls to commune with them at first hand. Men, the bravest, have had a secret fear of death, but to you the body is nothing but a shell, discarded when you will.

As

As in the ancient day the Magi from the East, the Maharajah of Benares and his friends travelled West to worship the Infant of the Manger, so to-day a western woman seeking knowledge in Holy Kashi found it falling from your child's lips. Mother of my body in other births, my spiritual mother in this life, who has been more than my earthly mother to me, always have your arms been open to me, never have your doors closed against me, always has there been room in your soft bosom for me. And when sometimes I have wandered from you, when the tests and trials of the Way you have taught me have brought seeming barriers between us, how often have Cowper's lines to his earthly parent re-echoed to me of you :

> Life has passed
> With me but roughly since I saw thee last.

Seeming barriers! For though continents may spread between us and rolling seas divide us in the flesh, you, mother of mystery, mother of occult power, can see me, hear me, speak to me, can come as near, nay, nearer to your child, than on that undying day in Benares, the first of our re-union in this life. The day of our meeting! Do you remember our visit to

to the river together? Where the brahman boy, with the refined face and long black eyelashes beneath the white brow mark of Shiva, stood in the water waiting to receive you, where I, though your child, in my mlenchcha's body, could not come. Then afterwards you passed in your white silk draperies bordered with vermilion, through the winding way to the Bisheshwar,* where the emerald parrots jewelled the golden dome of Shiva's holiest temple, where the brass trays outside are heaped high with the orange tubes and snowy stars of Shiva's toilet flower, the Hara Shringara, the royal blue velvet slippers of the Aparagita, which means the invincible, and whose vines make the bangle worn the tenth day after Durga † Puja,‡ and the flamingo tints of the Karavira, one of the eight flowers which must be offered to Durga the eighth day of the month of Ashvina.

Shall we ever forget that first dinner we took together? When, after the spicy herb dishes and creamy sweets were duly despatched, you gave me the pan,§ which I took from you then all unknowing it was the outer symbol in the mystic school of my adoption as your

* Temple of "The Lord of the Universe."

† The female aspect of Shiva. ‡ Worship. § Betel nut.

 chela,

chela,* already a *fait accompli* in the other life.

As we sat side by side eating from the same dishes, yet outwardly distant as East from West, a woman of the alien conquering race, a purdah nashin of the Ganges, how close together the subtle Karmic ties drew us, how your bosom rose and fell beneath the violet and gold of your silken sari, how your dark radiant eyes drew mine, your warm brown hand rested on my white one, before you told me, mother, before I knew——!

Then later in the Kumari scented twilight when we sat beneath the Southern cross while the night breeze from the river waved the palms, and the perfumes of the crimson Karupi flower you had placed on your temple altar stirred towards us, you asked me to sing of that Kindly Light to which a great Catholic Cardinal has hymned the very same prayer, almost in the same words, which the brahmans have preserved for countless generations.

* * * * *

We have found you and we can never lose you again !

Never ! No !

* Disciple.

What

What though a cruel Karma tore me from you for my western birth of nightmares? What though even since our meeting my sins have sometimes screened your face?

Never can the fetters love has forged through so many lives be broken, always will you draw me with hands across the sea and cords around the world as strong as steel though soft as silk. Not even do the barriers of death and rebirth themselves for long divide us. Sounding across continents and oceans, bridging divisions of race and colour, your voice in clear imperious accents calls me ever and again back to you, and as I kneel to kiss your feet I hear the soft insistent whisper, "Easier can the earth leave the sun than you can run away from us!"

The world never knows of its greatest men. So that pure and blessed House beneath the gilt umbrella of the Umbrella alace and surrounded by all the umbrella domes of the departed Dynasty of Oudh, in grounds where once the five thousand ladies of the royal harem lived, has no external mark upon it that Children of the Highest are dwelling there.

Is it only in the fancy of us to whom it is Earth's Elysium that the birds carol clearer,

the

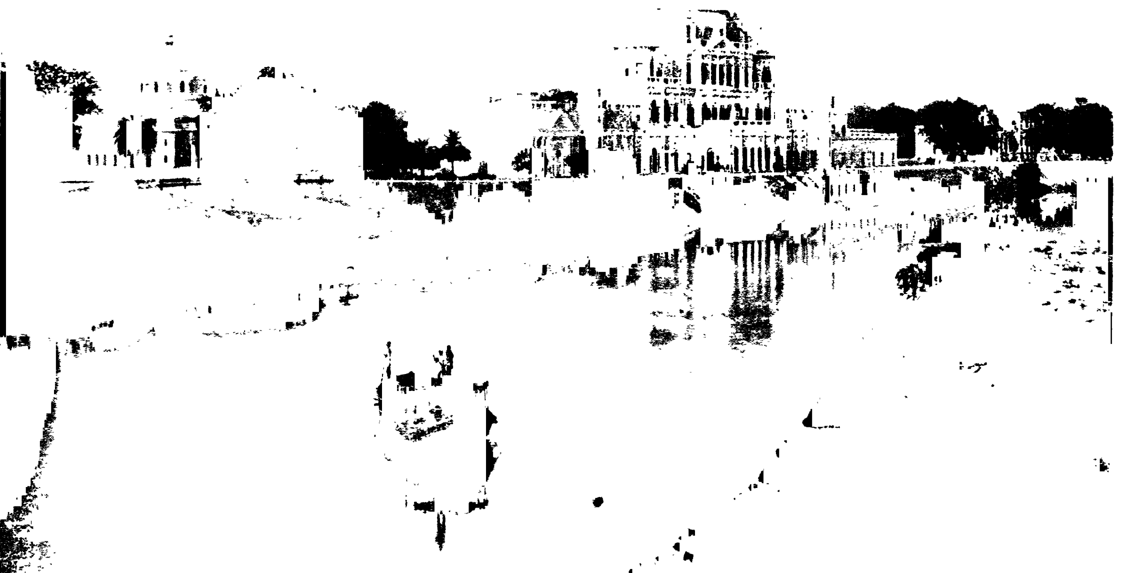


Photo by Lawrie

THE UMBRELLA PALACE, LUCKNOW

the flowers scent sweeter than elsewhere? Is it only the radiance of the Eastern sunlight vibrating in the gardens that the emerald of the moina * birds gleams brighter, the hibiscus glows intenser, the cry of the muezzin from the gold-tipped minarets rising behind the banyans sounds more sonorous than of wont? Yet even in external beauty the forms of those within it are lovelier, more perfect than elsewhere.

Nothing to show! In ancient days the mysteries were veiled in awesome secrecy. To-day those who know them, to whom nature is an open book, are living amongst us, some of them, in the flesh. Here some of the earth's most famous men and women have felt themselves of small account, the double first man of his University, the *bien desiré* of London, acts as a servant, the greatest teacher of her day has come as a humble learner, the ambassadress chela gladly eats rice with her hands.

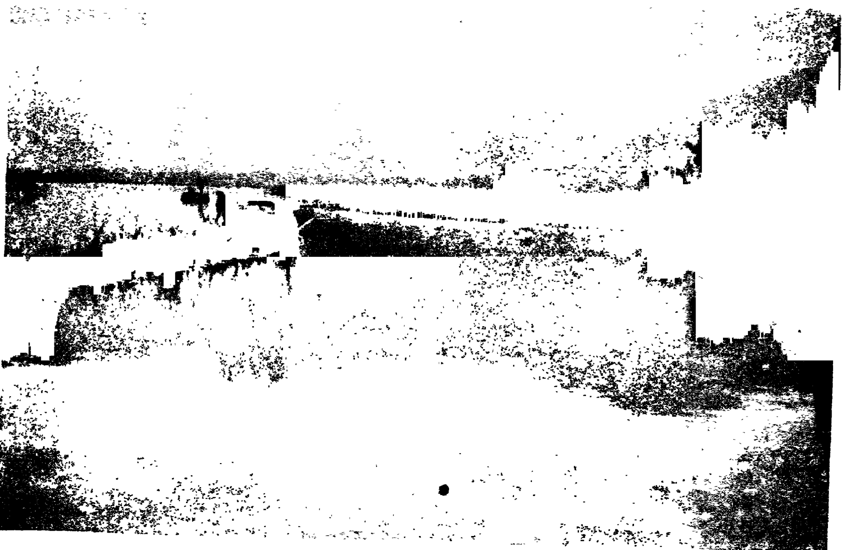
Nothing to show! That there two worlds meet. Yet we who KNOW can only breathe, God make us worthy to cross the threshold!

* Indian parrot.

THE HAPPY VALLEY

Blest hour! it was a luxury—to be!

On a Place of Retirement.



A FLOATING GARDEN, DAHL LAKE

THE HAPPY VALLEY

Over the plains of Bengal, halting awhile at a shrine of spiritual blessing. What though the bedstead has no mattress? What if the food is coolies' fare? Kings have desired in vain to behold what is seen here and to know what are everyday matters to the inmates. Even the outer court of the Temple is sweeter than elsewhere. Outside my little window, on rising, I hear the Bengali sub-judge, who has afforded me hospitality from the overflowing bungalow next door, and his friend the Eurasian clerk, neither of whom the smart mems at the club would admit past their verandahs, talk Tennyson together, while, in the evening, fields of white poppies, sleeping their stainless sleep, promise lethe to the weariest, and yellow avenues of mangoes waft hot breaths of pine, and in the dusk the toddy palm clatters weirdly overhead, and the man who taps it nightly looks like a monkey slithering down with a rope. Then on to Lucknow, the royal city of the last hapless dynasty of India, to the

Dilaram

Dilaram Kothi, opposite the Chutter Munzil, which once housed the royal librarian. Across the river the cream and gold of the piled-up palace, capped by the gold umbrella, proudly borne aloft and glinting in the sun, whose loveliness is doubled into the blue stream beneath, bordered by crimson sedges, that aquamarine Goomti that Unguid, the pensioner, three times crossed with Havelock's message concealed in his ear.

Inside the mansion the company is as unique as its surroundings. Our host, an Indian of princely family, is busy *pro temps* arranging the meeting of workers in that cause whose love has convened us all here. So I am welcomed by a smart-looking Englishman, faultlessly dressed in Shantung silk, whom I take at first for a "heaven born," but who turns out to be an engine-driver of the Lucknow-Jhansi line, who presently gives us an excellent address on thought-control in an engine. He jumps up from his breakfast at a table where, as likely as not, he may be wedged in between two ambassadresses, one reigning, the other a dowager, who in her day was the favourite *par excellence* of the queens and empresses of Europe. Sitting on the

the floor in an obscure corner of the room is a little brown, shrivelled-up old man, with a cast eye and a long grey beard, who hails from the Dariba byways and whose memory has seen Delhi drenched in mlenchcha * blood. Sitting with bowed head over clasped hands, he is yet a personage in the spiritual world, the real, where the ambassadresses are of small account, though he may not know his greatness in waking hours.

It is a motley company there in those royal precincts, where the amaranth trees wave over the steps down which to the Goomti the languid feet of the Asylum of the Universe have so often dallied, and "Boppery bop" † sighed from the lips of the Refuge of the World, and mother monkeys perform with pains the toilettes of their little ones round the temple, and all around the cardinal banners of the gold mohur tree, India's most gorgeous flower, are blazing for the marriage-month, and behind the grey, fluted domes of the tomb mansions on their green velvet stoeps proclaim the pomp of kings, before whose majesty in life a sneeze meant loss of nose, still grand in death.

* Non-Hindu. † "Dear me!"

 Then

Then in the sunset we wend to the Kaiser Bagh, the Durbar Hall, open all round to the glow in the east, opposite the Begum's palace, where the royal fish is emblazoned in the orange stucco, the sign flabby as the signified, from where the female sepoys of the Padshah Begum, the king of Delhi's daughter, preceded her and the kettledrums, the peacock fans, and embroidered umbrellas as she passed to prayer.

Could she have known that a Western woman would dare, only fifty years later, to speak all unveiled from the royal Gadi !

Yet what good wishes from my sisters of the Orient have followed me from behind the purdah on my mission to proclaim to the outer world the messages of those divine men who have chosen the East as their immemorial home, the least of whose servants am I. Bengalis, radiant in soft dark beauty, have painted the white tilak of Shiva on my paler forehead, as dressed in the setting sun hues of the Hindu ascetic I have gone forth to remind their nation that the Mahatmas live. Kashmiri brahmanis, white as myself, have wound themselves round me with links as supple as the winding of their own Jhelum. Deccani

Ranis

Ranis have offered to instruct me in the holy books. Radiant forms in silken saris, passing to and fro among stage-like scenes of crimson lanterns hung in walls of roses and exotic with mango perfumes, have led me to where, under cooling fountains, the creeping pachpati forms a bower in which the marble Mahadev sheds Gunga from his locks, because their bright eyes, peeping through the purdah, penetrated the pale skin and recognised the true Hindu beneath.

Still on. Ever towards the Magnetic North and stop where the brown vultures cloud upon a dead bhail * on the red cliffs of Rawal Pindi. Why is it that the people in the Punjab seem more living men and women, less passionless pieces of mechanism than the other English men and women in India? That the men love in the old style, the women with more abandon than in the United Provinces, which savours so exactly of Kensington, with its waltzes and costumes only two weeks behind, where the contractor's wife "can't know every one," with its ceaseless talk of "supper at the Savoy." Or in Malabar Hill with its calling traditions, its own Governor said, "of

* Bullock.

 Tooting";

Tooting ;" the Yacht Club, from whose door the own brother of the Emperor of India was turned away because accompanied by a "native" friend, who, as like as not, was the Nizam of Hyderabad. Is it the silent, insistent presence of the grim foe across the frontier? Is it the eternal watch for the thief in the night? So that they may be said to sleep armed, which bids them eat and drink for to-morrow they may die, these pale-faced men and women of the Punjab so earnest in their passions and their play.

To-night, at the *table d'hôte* dinner of the biggest hotel in Pindi, couples are dining together, perhaps, for the last time on earth. Those two from the cantonment of Jhelum were planning this morning a jaunt to Kashmir next week. This evening she is pale and worn, for he leaves her to-night for the Mohmand country, at the hottest time of the year, with little water and much fever, even if the tribesmen's bullet spares. This is the second time in a few weeks they fly to arms. Nevertheless it is a great night at the Mess opposite, and there comes the sweet, sad strain of waltzes which have quickened our pulses of yore, not the latest flash from the Gaiety, for

 the

the Punjab is old-fashioned, like all deep-feeling people.

Is it that some of those who have caused our own heart throbs, ghosts whose memories will never die, have lived out their little day upon its scena? People who, whether it comes from God or devil, have that greatest of all gifts, personal attraction, which all who are treading the occult life of either white or black magic, the paths which lead to the heights of heaven, the depths of hell, have in greater or lesser degree, so that they at once arrest the attention.

The twentieth-century youth of a previous chapter told me of his master in magic, a Belgian, who "believes in the ultimate triumph of evil and therefore in doing what is wrong," that people turned to look when he passed down the street; and so it was said by some of the greatest Master of white magic of our day living in the outer world, that "he could not be an occultist, he was so charming!" Of One so great that nothing less than His life's blood would satisfy the powers of darkness, He who allowed them to kill Him because it was better so for the world.

Shadow Land! Where are they now? The

The shapes which, as the languid waltz floats through the chick, come out and glide between me and the white bed, they who have touched my life to the quick in the old times, they who have left marks upon it for good or evil, have all passed away, and only I remain in flesh and blood to tell the tale.

She who was once the Punjab's queen, the Indian Helen, the serpent of the Five Rivers, with the loveliest voice, the greatest magnetism in the land, who never tried to conquer because to be seen was enough.

Or he, the most exquisite dancer of the Bengal Cavalry, who once travelled from Cabul to Lahore for one dance, with the prematurely whitened hair, whose greatest charm concealed the profoundest cynicism.

And she of the cat-like eyes, glittering in the dark, whose uncanny fascination and brilliant cleverness were enlisted for the forces of evil.

One by one these ghostly men and women pass before the arm chair where I sit awaiting the hour when sleep will come and bear me away to that other life, the Real, and as one after another their haunting eyes meet mine they call in chorus:

 "We

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on! We have lived out our day to the uttermost! Yet what remains?"

So on to the Happy Valley whose keynote is Felicity.

Is it because the Great Ones who send light to the West have their dwellings, it is said, in the fastness of the Kashmiri Mountains that all the beauties of Europe seem to be poured out here at Their feet as in a jewelled mosaic? From Murree to Srinagar the Himalayan ranges are hung in imperial purple below the ermine mantle of their sovereign, Nunga Parbat, who looks what he is, a monarch of the world's mountains, soaring second only to three in pride. Then down, down to the Jhelum's gorge, whose keynote is anger, the indignation of a guardian, stern but helpless, who has seen his fair ward ever ravished by spoilers, this gloomy ravine which once re-echoed to Alexander's men, the ring of their horned helmets.

And the valley is carpeted to its amethyst walls by tawny plush of English buttercups dashed with blood red spattering of poppies, and the white rose wafts the perfume of its wedding array, and poplar colonnades of

 Holland

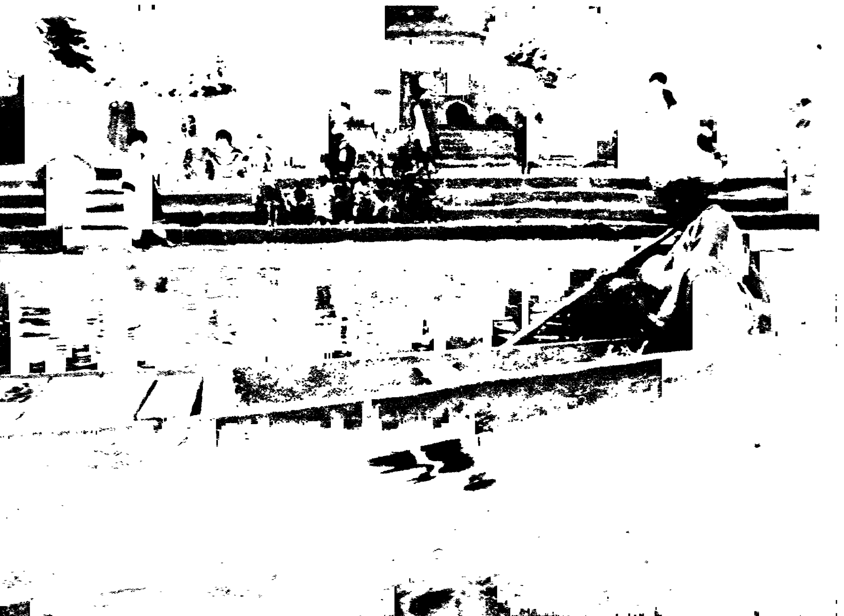
Holland lead to Alpine lakes on whose bosoms Venetian gondolas glide, and ochre stained ruins of Sun Temples rise from groves of cream *crêpe* and violet velvet iris whose scent suggests subtleties.

Oh, Kashmiri Sun Temples, what sinister memories will you have for me while life lasts!

Near Srinagar, the haven of rest, the tonga halts among the buttercups and willows, and poppies, to give our fresher horses to speed a spare and bronzed soldier, recalled in delight from his hard-won leave to rush to the Mohmand rising, his one eager question as the horses are changed, "You must know the latest, was my regiment the—Sikhs engaged?" A splendid type, the guardians of the frontier, men who have made England great. Meanest food, tent to cover, grateful if the air in the tent is only cooking, not swamped with rain, surroundings that an English navvy would turn up his nose at, yet withal such gentlemen, to retire when their best is given on a pittance. Surely amongst the world's grandest workers these.

I who have travelled over three continents have found all scenery characteristic. If put

 down



FELICITY

down blindfolded could recognise at once where I was, and spot the difference between the white trackless fields and log cabins of Canada, the reflective shadows of the Scotch lochs, the cloying sweetness of the Mediterranean shores, the day dying in the arms of the twilight on the Indian plains.

And what varieties, what strange types of fellow passengers have I met in my pereginations, from that party of Americans travelling round the world in search of a Mahatma and a religion, to those who were only looking for an establishment and a husband. "Ships that pass in the night, signal and pass on!"

Yet I have found that the Grand Trunk Road conducts ever to the feet of Mahadeva. This is written beneath that earliest of all Kashmiri temples of His which Anglo-Indians call the Takt-i-Suleiman, but we who are of the older faith "Sankaracharya's," because that great Mahatma, some say Avatar * travelled there.

It may interest some to know that the Wisdom of the East teaches that Sankara had the soul, or personality, of Gautama Buddha, the spirit of Shiva. That Gautama incarnated

* Incarnation.

again

again to fulfil the Karma of an error in judgment in divulging more of the Secret Doctrine than his hearers were ready for. He had unsettled many minds hitherto true to the brahmanical ideals, so returned as the greatest teacher of Vedanta. But the God in him tired of the flesh and threw off the mortal coil in a Himalayan cave at the age of thirty-three. To work out this Karma the personality again incarnated as Jesus Christ, and this is why the Founder of Christianity died a premature and violent death at the age of thirty-three. So that the greatest teachers of the Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian religions, were in reality one Person. As befits his austerer glories this temple crowns a frowning, fort-like hill, rising opposite my window, and at His feet are hedges of chrome yellow roses, the yellowest roses ever seen, dyed in His sacred colour, and the air is thick with the white acacia blossoms the Maruts * waft towards Him, and the note wound out by the bhails † at the well is the same as for millions of years, and nestling beneath the hill, with the temple's

* Spirits of the wind. According to Hinduism all the forces of nature are controlled by conscious beings.

† Bullocks.

 shadow



THE BHILS AT THE WELL

shadow on it, is a flowery garden where the vines twine round the pyre of the last Kashmiri Sati, for the Kashmiri women have never failed in devotion in life or death, and both Martand and the Panthan temples have side chapels added by the queens of their kingly builders.

In the City of the Sun are all things new and strange.

The light Shikara floats past the Maharajah's palace, where behind the richly carved, hermetically sealed shutters the Dogra Princess reigns as queen of a harem which includes many subordinate beauties she herself brought to her lord as part of her dower. *Autre pays autres mœurs!*

Poor little Maharajah, the little mouse clinging to a pretence of sovereignty between the paws of the Lion and the Bear, who have agreed to let him play there awhile until they have fought out who shall eat him up. And he gives a State banquet on the Lion's birthday, provides lavishly his chef's triumphs, and pours out his best champagne like water, and his lacs of rupees on fireworks which transform the Jhelum into the Adriatic *en fête*. Yet not without a sense of humour, as when an ultra

 aggressive

aggressive bara mem wished to penetrate into the mysteries of that zenana which only one white woman has ever entered, and she of the Hindu faith, a sly smile lit for a moment the mild features of the little man below the enormous turban as he replied he "should be delighted, only it was a rule that any lady entering the harem stayed there!"

Floating further by daylight, the palace gives place to piled houses hanging above the rippling water where the persistent merchant-men show loveliest wares beneath sign-boards rejoicing in the poetic names of Ramzana, Subhana, Salama, even bright Ganemede is there, and the old Persian Shiah, whose English is a good imitation of drawls I have heard in Bond Street as he assures us. "This old yellow bowl was brought into Kashmir 800 years ago, and is now sold by persons in poverty. All ladies, all womans, who want money sell it. O—oh, no! I am the best merchant in the place. Why should I sell dearer than these *local people?*"

Then through the lotus of the Dahl the lacquered paddle glides, passing *viâ* willow lanes glancing with golden orioles, kingfisher's poising, bulbuls passionately singing, water-

lilies



IN THE CITY OF THE SUN

lilies dreaming, temples roofed with groves of white iris, women lovely as houris in purple and orange draperies posing like goddesses with brass bowls and samovars. For we are in the land of the almond blossom, at the meeting of the empires, and all the glories of the world seem to be massed together here. Bijou water hens submerge themselves *in toto* at our approach, shy as girls surprised in bathing, giant adjutant cranes stand up emotionless as money-lenders waiting for their prey, and at my feet a little girl lies in the shikara, coiled and twisted like a small brown snake, crooning Hindu ditties in a minor strain. On past the Pari Mahal, the Fairies Palace, which looks like a Buddhist Gompa, on Zebauman Mountain which Dara Shikoh, Shah Jehan's martyred son, built for his tutor Mullah Shah. Here it is said a wicked magician once lived by the power of his magic and spirited away the astral bodies of king's daughters in their sleep. One princess by order of her royal father, brought away a chenar * leaf to indicate the abode of her seducer, whereupon all the kings of India seized the wicked enchanter and tore him to pieces.

* Plane tree.

Then to pause beside the Shalimar, that Garden of Love where Jehāngir and Nur Jehan made up their only quarrel, whose anniversary this is, for it is now the Feast of Roses, and to-night the fairy boat procession will wend down the Jhelum, and the Maharajah's Shikara will take the prize as "Ruby," bathed in the gems own light, and the Shalimar itself is joyous in a riot of roses in tints of blood, cardinal, vieux rose, peony, dust, pink, lemon petalled, snow white, green veined, and black. A clamour of gorgeousness, rivalled only by the yellow jessamine planted and loved by the Light of the World around her heronry.

So we passed into that garden sung and sighed for all over the world, under the direct patronage of Shiva, for the Hill of Mahadeva rises to 15,000 feet sheer above us, crowned with snows, and our American archiologist says the scent of the white iris at its foot reminds him of his home arbutus, and our Hindu pundit tells us how Mahadeva himself once appeared to his devotee who agonised on that hill because in the Kali Yog* the

* The Black Age, when spirituality is lowest.

 teachings



THE SHALIMAR

teachings of the great Lord of Yoga * had become dead, and telling him to look beneath a giant rock he found there engraved the Shiva Sutras, which have ever since sustained the souls of all Yogis.

And then our two scholars, having both visited Japan in the course of their adventurous lives, tell me, whose Mecca is India, of the mysteries of that land whose Emperor is the one monarch in East or West whose private life is an unknown quantity, of the bones of the Blessed One which were conveyed home by the Archbishop of Japan, who received them from the royal hands of Siam at Bankok, and of Lafcadio Hearn, whose hatred of Europeans was so great that towards the end of life he would walk up and down in the rain rather than mix in a room with his brother professors.

On, on, past

> Lotus buds that float
> On those cool waters where we used to dwell.
> Through maze of lotus
> The lacquered paddle glides
> Ah ! Jhelum river.

And the wild thyme's pungent perfumes are scrunched out in billows by the houseboat's

* The Path to Union with God.

 advancing

advancing prow, and the maji log answer each other in responsions

Jo Pir !
Dast Gir !*

as the Jhelum's sweet waters merge into the icy Sind fed by the glaciers of Haramouk, Shiva's Crown.

As evening falls we are nearing Moghul Gunderbal at its foot, Gunderbal where the kingly chenars they planted stand in serried ranks upon the banks, where the clouds hang harp-like upon the moon which lights their bridges, symbolical of their regrets for fair, far Ferghana.

Then the Sind Valley, on the road to Leh.

And the orioles gilding is brighter, and the kingfishers flash more brilliant blue, and the white rose's perfumes are intenser than before, for all knowledge, all wisdom of our time, has passed along this footpath which has led the Light of Asia to the outer world. For does it not lead in physical nearness to the ashramas of those two divine Mahatmas who sent her, that strange old Russian woman, that profoundest enigma of the nineteenth century,

* O Saint ! give us an arm !

who



THE BOATMAN AND THE MOGHUL BRIDGE AT GUNDERBAL

who *came down this path single-handed to fight the materialism of the West!*

SHE must have travelled by this route!

What mixed emotions surge as the dandy sways upon the shoulders of my six stalwart coolies above the rushing Sind river, watching the white jessamine's indigenous growth and the Chinese honeysuckle's tangles.

On the road to Leh!

At my feet in the dandy reclines again the little Hindu girl. "Do you like this country, Sita?" Is it the pleasure of a child or the recognition of a woman thousands of years old that flashes from the brown eyes?

On the road to Leh!

Yet "Not by this route!" says my brahman guide, who has broken the very highest caste for love of that Light. "Not by this route!" as he points to where the evening star burns above the Zoji La Pass, "Shall we reach Them? Is there not a *nearer way?*"

Only to-day has come the tidings of the "death" of one who was an advanced disciple of Theirs, but whose last days had been passed in serving Them in a chemist's shop.

In his affluent days he had given his all to Their service, old and in delicate health he did

his

his duty to his family over his ledgers, among the phials and nostrums, until They saw he had had enough of it and took him home to Them. For him the next step was adeptship.

One evening I sat beside him on the house top of a neighbouring caravanserai, built by a charitable Hindu widow, as he wound a new brahman's thread, and he spoke of that final glorious guerdon, the last step in the long, long ladder of evolution, for the adept is the flower of his age. "I don't think it will come in this life," he had said, as though in prophetic vision. Dear old man, as so often I ploughed my way

Through the great bazaar

to forget the sordid life of cantonment and club in the light of your lovely face, and to talk of Them with you who knew the Mahatmas at first hand as we sat among your bottles, do not forget me now altogether in your glory. As you yourself found something in this poor mlenchcha worthy of love, intercede with Them for her !

On the road to Leh !

I have seen many of the world's loveliest visions, but I know of none other of such

 almost



SITA AND THE WANGAT TEMPLE

almost unearthly loveliness as when one descends down a glade of the Wangat Valley, one day's march up the Sind, as one is carried in the dandy over the rocky twisting path above :

The mighty river rushing, sobbing seawards,

and descrys a first view of the Indo Greek temples of the Lord of Ghosts at the head of the glen, just beneath the eternal snows. The wild white roses are here dyed deepest pink, old rose in fact, and the du Barri tints of the wild indigo flowers rival them in intensity, as though to heighten the effect of the snowy peaks seen behind the colonnades of pillars their thickets clothe, of temples twenty centuries old.

It is said that King Jalauka who reigned over Kashmir in the second century, B.C., came every day in the astral body thirty-five miles from his capital Srinagar, to bathe in the sacred spring beside the temple. But one day he was absorbed too much in his regal duties and forgot to come. When at length he remembered his puja * it was too late in the day, yet he would not eat without having first bathed and worshipped, as every true Hindu

* Worship.

 must,

must, and so great a devotee was he of Shiva, that He enabled him by the power of Yoga to produce another spring at far Srinagar of the very same water, and there the king bathed. To prove the identity of the waters a golden vessel was thrown into the stream at Wangat which eventually turned up at Srinagar in the water, which is there called the Sodara Spring which means born of the same parents.

All these Wangat sanctities lie on the return path of pilgrimage from the holy lake of Gungabul lying far, far above, at the foot of Haramouk, of which more anon.

Suffice it now that the bright red roses grow right out of the big Temple and the seven subsidiary temples, and the tank for the washing of puja utensils is 22 feet long, hewn out of the solid rock.

The tents are even now pitched in the ghostly shadows of the Temples, in a Kashmiri Valley far beyond the last human habitation, and I am alone in the hoary precincts of Bhuteshvara,* the Lord of Spirits, for even Sita is sleeping, with only the companionship of the roaring river far beneath, the perfume of the roses in the ruined colonnades, the

* One of Shiva's titles.

 occasional

occasional snapping of a twig suggestive of a passing bear.

At midnight when the wan light of the moon floods the valley, the earthly counterpart of the pale radiance of Shiva, the tents will be struck, and I alone with my brahman guide and twenty men to carry us up the 4000 feet of almost precipitous rock beetling above us will start on the first stage of that journey.

Strange do you say that a woman reared beneath an English cathedral spire should set forth on such a quest? But the Secret Doctrine teaches that we are each the product of the experiences not of one but of many lives. For did not Queen Lila by the power of Yoga see "as clear as daylight" every past step in the long path of her evolution. "After being differentiated as a separate entity out of the one Brahman I have undergone different births in 800 bodies, a huntress clad in leaves, a bird rending the snare it was enmeshed in, a King of Sourashtra country, and a mosquito. Thus have I been whirling in many births, and having been tossed too and fro in the clutches of Illusion, like a straw in ocean waves, I have now landed safely on the shore of Salvation."

Had

Had to Cecil Rhodes been given the clear vision of Lila, would he have complained so bitterly of life as "a day at the seaside"?

It is on the lower levels the blue season for flowers, and so we pass meadows of the Jacob's Ladder heavenwards, the myosotis and golfer's cabbage reminding us of the earthly interests we are leaving behind us, and the speedwell who wishes us well as we climb. Then through the fern country to the realms of the yellow violet, no longer modestly attired, but sporting a brazen yellow dress, and making eyes as we pass by.

Where the crags get so steep and the air so rare that the coolies haul us up with ropes and straps, and the guides pummel the breath back into us, the fir gives place to the birch zone, and, still higher, to the juniper, where the wild eagles soar. Here the mauve and white anemones form a carpet, and the yellow potentilla, and the milk plant rears a sickly head, unpleasant as a woman's jealousy, and the sinister green of the cobra flower lurks below the waxy hot-house like masses of the daphne, hiding amongst the airy fairy fields of white columbine. So the route leads on over the down at the top of the crags, for we have

 been



OUR GUIDE AT THE WANGAT VALLEY

been dragged up our six miles of ascent and gradient of 4000 feet, and follow the fairy route of the flower garden below the snow-drifts, on one side, and the forest of hundreds of terrible icy peaks, all over 15,000 feet, on the other. Following the line of the melting snow, the flowers bloom gorgeous as in an English garden, and according to the law of altitude, for we are now at 10,000 feet, the plants are dwarfed that the blooms may be larger and richer in colour than below. So the mauve and pink iris is spotted snake-wise, and the yellow and white ranunculus race down the avalanche bed, and the true blue gentian shames the pert mauve of the merry widow primula, and side by side with the white snow flowers, inseparable as good from evil, the green lilies, shaded into nun's grey, bow their bells as if to conceal their dreadful-looking blood-stained interiors—flowers, as I once heard remarked of an orchid, that one would be sorry to meet alone on a dark night. But, most effective of all, the dwarfed columbine hangs giant bells of duskiest imperial purple, generally behind the shelter of a stone, as different as possible from the tall white bells of the same flower

 ringing

ringing so gaily on the wind in the woods below.

Then Haramouk himself, whose name means Shiva's crown, looms suddenly on our left, rising 7000 feet, clothed in glacier, sheer above the holy lake on whose shores we now stand, the eternal snows of his hoary head 18,000 feet high. The Lake of Gungabal is unique, with its coating of blue ice set in the white snows, and down to the very brink of the holy water and on its islets in the ice spreads the scarlet mantle of the primula, for is it not written, "Though thy sins be red like crimson, they shall be white as snow."

The brahman and his servant bathe, dodging the pack-ice floating down from the glacier, before they break their fast, though it is now mid-day, and I sit for an hour watching to seize a moment when the clouds shall roll away from the summit and give my camera a chance.

There are other watchers too, for the giant vultures are perched on the rocks around like black magicians who ever haunt each holy spot.

On the other side of Haramouk is the Woolar Lake, beneath whose waters lies

 buried



MY BRAHMAN GUIDE AT GUNGABAL

buried a wicked city, destroyed by earthquake and floods; for Woolar means "cave," and often have the boatmen heard the groans of the lost below, and, like Dante, seen the bubbles on the surface caused by their sighs.

And now Farewell, dear reader, or, if you are so minded, *Au revoir*. For at what more fitting place can I say Good-bye to you who have accompanied me over so many thousand miles of my wanderings than at Shiva's feet? I who, perhaps, stand at that elusive junction of East and West.

For if they ever join hands, may we not say it is in the persons of those men and women who, Hindus in past lives, have been required by the Law of Destiny to take western bodies in this one, but remain true to the mighty Motherland, and her holy ideals, beneath the pale skin.

Of India these cry ever, This country is ours! Our fates are inextricably woven with hers, even as she stands symbolical of the events of our own lives, with Bombay our port of destiny, with Delhi our fleeting dreams of the senses, with Benares our sanctuary when life's storms are past.

Lying before me now are letters, landmarks

 of

of my journeys, from persons ranging from Draga of Servia to Bernard Shaw, from Prince Kropotkin to Liane de Pougy. Do not start. Remember that the wisest of the Greeks, moving amidst a general corruption of which we in modern London only hint with bated breath, shows us that grand example of taking each man and woman as *they are.*

Queen, courtesan, man of the hour, exile prince, each and sundry met in the course of my treks has taught me some lesson as varied as the lands through which I have passed.

Passing, passing—ah! Whither? Why?
Does the heart know why? Can the Soul say where?
I pass, but I pause to catch ev'ry cry,
To watch ev'ry face, be it foul or fair.
I must hear all the notes of the nightingales—
Do they sing to a God or to graven things—
And not till the last faint flute-note fail
Will I stay my flight, will I fold my wings.

But all have led home to Hindustan.

An eminent surgeon, in his charming and observing book upon India has written of "the strange mystery, a mystery that is perhaps for ever unfathomable by the Western mind, broods over the Empire. Thoughtful travellers are conscious of it, but they can only touch the fringe. Only those very

closely

closely in sympathy with the East may attempt to lift the curtain, and within there must ever be a Holy of Holies veiled from their eyes."

Into that mystery I have penetrated further than other Europeans of my generation save those who may be counted on one hand.

And I have found that the Holy of Holies is not screened by the veil of distinction of colour, nor of creed, nor of race, but only by the barriers erected within ourselves, by the stumbling-blocks arising from our human nature. "The Kingdom of Heaven is taken by violence!" cried a great member of the Himalayan Lodge, and so the East will reveal her secrets only to those who seek her with desperate devotion.

Always since the first sweet dawn in Bombay, when the pinions of the yachts piercing the silver mist floating between sea and sky seemed to point to the portals of a more glorious world, has Holy India fulfilled the promise she whispered in the silence then.

What has the mystery of the East meant for me? Looking back over the years since first I woke in the world's loveliest harbour, passed as a dream, a delirium of events,

 sometimes

sometimes ecstatic, sometimes lurid, always pregnant of a mighty meaning.

It brooded over its very gate, shrouded the low shores of Port Said at sunset, tipped the golden sails of the dahabiehs, whispered in our muffled footfalls over the desert sanded main street, the only safe one after dark, screeched hoarsely from the horrors hiding in the byways of the wickedest town on earth.

It drowned the National Anthem when the State Procession entered the Throne Room, the Imperial Power symbolled by the strongest man and the loveliest woman of our day, figures who will live in history long after the puppets surrounding them have ceased to gibber. Drawn by its fascination they have given it of their best, one of them life itself.

It lurks in the mazy patterns and dusky tints of embroideries worked in Bokhara, the City of Twilight, whose women have stitched into them lifetimes of joys and pains, with ever one fragment left incomplete.

It sighed in the accents of human understanding heard beneath the blaze of the Southern Cross, in brilliant moonlit harbours,

and

and amidst the desolation of a city of tombs, pulsating with the thud of the screw on crowded decks passing over seas scented with orange blossoms, and in the solitudes of green mountain lakes whose shores were covered with the belled spires of the lily of the valley, and draped with masses of maidenhair fern.

It is in the fire ceremony, when the hosts of Agni * are under human control, so that even little children can pass barefoot through the molten furnace, and find it a soft carpet.

But its call is most insistent in the white silence of a Himalayan winter, when the panthers leave pugs in the snow secreting the scarlet begonia buds beneath.

It fills cave temples with hidden chambers, where the Priests of the Wisdom still perform its rites as ever, and in mystic cities masked by Maya † from the vulgar gaze, and cradling the Coming Race of a more glorious age. It is in the lives of men and women living, some of them, among us, to whom the body is but a sheath, a shell to be tossed off at will, experimenters who have finished with all reading

* The Fire God. † Illusion.

experiencers

experiencers who have done with all speculation, to whom past lives are as yesterday, and nature an open book.

It is in the mystic rights of the Shiva Puja, of the occult Lingam which has come from a Holier World than ours, which *must* be worshipped every day with flowers and frankincense and mantrams,* and then brings the Highest to the guardian of Its shrine, if tended with entire devotion. But its concentrated essence is in our own souls, we who are Orientals whether of dark or fair, so that we CANNOT if we would, disobey its call.

What do you most want ? Have you yet reached that stage of vairagya,† when the outer life nauseates, its music sounds noise, its colours tire, its perfumes stench, its banquets sicken, its loves prove passing nerve thrills ? But there is another life of which my pledged word permits me only to hint. Might I try to write fully even as I know it I should need the ocean's volumes for ink, the rainbows tints for illustration, the spheres' music for utterance.

From afar, from beyond the hoary Himalaya,

* Sanskrit invocations.

† A Sanskrit term, meaning disgust or weariness.

a messenger, the grand old woman of the last century, has brought to us fragments from the oldest book in the world, perhaps of other worlds, handed across the earth's mightiest wall, engraved on oblong discs preserved on the altars of temples far from the haunts of men, dim with the mists of prehistoric ages. What say they ?

"Woe to the living dead !"

My last lines are penned while resting on "the meadow of flowers." All around are occupied solely in eating, drinking, and playing golf to "keep fit."

Fit for what ?

Not vanity, but a great compassion has prompted the writing of these pages, a profound pity for those whom occultists speak of as "dead," those outside their life.

Into that Life the tired traveller entering finds himself indeed in "an Aladdin's dream."

Yet it is the only life which is real.

There love brings a greater love which does not chill.

There pleasure never palls.

There A.D. does not decay.

And as the lingam and the cross have the

 same

same meaning so the Path to Knowledge is one, pursued by whatever creed, in whatever clime.

Thou art THYSELF the object of thy search, the voice unbroken,

The Voice of the Orient.

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS